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TAP CHI CONG SAN

No 4, April 1988

Directive of the Party Secretariat on the Work of TAP CHI CONG SAN

42100009A Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 4, Apr 88 pp 1-4

[Signed by Do Muoi on behalf of the Secretariat]

[Text] Improving its theoretical work is a pressing and long range requirement of our party. In the face of the new situation, TAP CHI CONG SAN, as the theoretical and political organ of the Party Central Committee, must shed light on the views and conclusions of the Sixth Congress in all fields: the economy, politics, culture, ideology, security, national defense, foreign affairs and party building. It must thoroughly explain the valuable lessons of our country's revolution that were summarized by the Sixth Congress and the new problems being raised by the realities of our country's revolution. The review must actively contribute, in the field of theory, to preparations for the party's Seventh Congress.

TAP CHI CONG SAN must scientifically analyze Lenin's views on socialism and apply the fundamental principles, particularly the material dialectic, of Marxism-Leninism in deeply analyzing our country's actual situation. On this basis, it must bring to light the special features of the socialist revolution and socialist construction in Vietnam. The editorials of the review must focus on the following issues: adopting new thinking; revamping the organization, replacing cadres and adopting a new style; establishing the new management mechanism within the economy; democratization; party building; establishing the new culture; and molding the new, socialist man. At the same time, it must criticize immature and incorrect views regarding socialism. TAP CHI CONG SAN must be in the vanguard of the struggle for the adoption of new thinking in keeping with the spirit of the Sixth Congress and must resolutely oppose all conservatism, inertia and every manifestation of doing things in the old way. At the same time, it must struggle against voluntarism, against everything that reflects an impetuous, subjective approach.

TAP CHI CONG SAN must contribute to the development of the social sciences (and, to some extent, help to stimulate the development of the natural sciences and the technical sciences) in our country, mainly by providing instructions in the nature of methodology concerning the development of these sciences.

At present, the Central Committee is preparing the draft of the platform for building socialism during the period of transition in our country and our socio-economic strategy. The review needs to carry articles which present the results of research in important matters related to this platform and this strategy. At the same time, TAP CHI CONG SAN must make good preparations for

propagandizing the major holidays in 1990 (the 60th anniversary of the founding of the party, the 45th anniversary of the founding of the state, the 100th anniversary of the birth of President Ho Chi Minh, the 15th anniversary of the total victory of the war of resistance against the United States for national salvation and the 120th anniversary of the birth of Lenin). The practical work of the theoretical organ of the party is to help draw lessons from the leadership experiences of the party today and summarize the historical experiences of the party in the processes of leading the revolution.

With the aim of improving the quality of the review and heightening its theoretical and militant nature in keeping with the requirements mentioned above, TAP CHI CONG SAN must improve both its contents and form. It must closely combine theory with practice and attach full importance to the needs of its many readers. The review must have ways and measures for encouraging inquisitiveness and creativity on the part of scientists and experienced management cadres and open democratic debates concerning major issues of a highly theoretical and practical nature. Generally speaking, articles must be concise and interesting, contain a large volume of information and be of high quality from the standpoint of theory. The review must devote a certain percentage of its pages to publishing the opinions of readers to help build the party and refine the lines and policies of the party. The review must include sections which introduce the experiences of the fraternal countries, reviews of foreign books and newspapers and timely, selected information on new matters of theory as well as practice within the community of socialist countries as well as within the international communist movement. It must eventually introduce a domestic books and newspapers section to provide information and instruct readers in the line of the party. The review should be permitted to provide selected information on the different views and perceptions of the fraternal parties concerning major issues of socialism with the aim of encouraging diversity in thinking and creativity in the building of models of socialism, all on the basis of protecting the unity and consensus of the socialist community.

While attaching importance to the research and theoretical work of its editors and to mobilizing talented collaborators to contribute articles to the review, the Editorial Board of TAP CHI CONG SAN must work closely with the other theoretical and scientific research agencies of the party and state in researching theory and organizing scientific seminars.

The Editorial Board of TAP CHI CONG SAN must improve its reader and distribution services, improve its organization and work methods, bring the review closer to life and be sure that it stays in constant touch with its readers and, in particular, maintains close relations with the various local party committees.

To create the conditions for TAP CHI CONG SAN to complete its task in the new stage of the revolution, the Political Bureau and the Party Secretariat will intensify

their guidance of the review in accordance with the work regulations of the Central Committee. The editor-in-chief of TAP CHI CONG SAN will be permitted to attend a number of meetings of the Political Bureau and the Secretariat. The Organization Department of the Central Committee will assign competent researchers and editors to the review. The Nguyen Ai Quoc Academy will help the Editorial Board train cadres who meet scientific standards. The Central Committee's Organization Department and Finance-Management Department must adopt systems, policies and plans for improving the health and looking after the living conditions of the cadres and personnel who work on the Editorial Board of TAP CHI CONG SAN. In addition, the responsible agencies must supply additional printing machines, means of transportation and other material and financial means in order to provide the Editorial Board of TAP CHI CONG SAN with favorable conditions for intensifying its theoretical research, keeping in touch with practice and expanding the distribution of the review to basic units, with an appropriate percentage of its copies being sold at retail prices to readers.

Party committees must organize the effective use of the review among cadres, party members and the people. Basic party organizations and party chapters with many members are allowed to use party funds to buy TAP CHI CONG SAN. Comrades who hold key positions of responsibility within the various sectors and localities must concern themselves with offering their observations and criticisms to and writing articles for the review.

NHAN DAN, QUAN DOI NHAN DAN, Voice of Vietnam Radio and Vietnam Television must report the main contents of each issue of the review.

Heightening Vigilance, Consolidating National Defense and the Security of Our Nation

42100009b Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese No 4, Apr 88 pp 5-10

[Article by Defense Minister Senior General Le Duc Anh]

[Text] Defending the fatherland has been affirmed as a strategic task of our entire party, people and army and not of the Armed Forces alone. (Naturally the Armed Forces are the core in carrying out the task of defending the fatherland). The adoption of this task was prompted by the objective law of socialist revolution, by our nation's thousand-year old experience in national building and defense, and by the actual situation in our country and the world at present.

We are not surprised by the fact that U.S.-led imperialism has always directed the spearhead of its frenzied opposition and sabotage activities at the socialist states so as to destroy them. Reality has shown that since the success of the Russian October Revolution it has stopped at no insidious scheme or trick to oppose the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, from "cold war" to

wars of sabotage and wars of aggression, from economic blockade and encirclement to provocation of rebellions and subversion, from "psychological warfare" to "wars of espionage," "peaceful evolution" and so forth. All these acts were and are still being committed daily and hourly by imperialism openly and cynically as well as secretly and cunningly.

At present, the class struggle is proceeding in a very complex fashion in the world, a world strewn with intermingled contradictions which strongly act upon one another, a changing, diversified and volatile world prone to clashes and conflicts. Although at times there have been manifestations of detente in some domains, this does not make the struggle between revolution and counter-revolution in the world any less fierce. U.S. imperialism is still continuing to step up the arms race by implementing dangerous plans and making huge expenditures, pushing mankind to the brink of global nuclear war; to maintain its reactionary henchmen and assist them in provoking and prolonging regional wars; and to pursue its hostile policies against the people of various nations. It has also actively carried out economic sabotage, causing increasing damage to many countries and making life difficult for their peoples. Especially, in the situation where conditions are not ripe for it to start a nuclear war, it has pushed forward even more strongly its ideological and economic sabotage of the socialist countries, sowing division among them. Among its maneuvers is its insidious scheme to force the Soviet Union into an arms race and other socialist countries to increase national defense expenditures, thus directly affecting their economic construction and development.

With regard to our country, following our people's great victory in 1975, imperialism, acting in collusion with expansionism and other international reactionary forces, continued to implement its hostile policies. They waged two wars of aggression at our country's southwestern and northern borders in 1976 and 1979. Defeated, they have turned to conducting a multifaceted war of sabotage to weaken our country, hoping to gradually force our people into submission. They have actively taken advantage of the socio-economic situation in our country, which still faces numerous difficulties, to kindle negative phenomena in society, and to bore deeply into them and our shortcomings, mistakes and weaknesses in the management of economy and society to realize their dark schemes. They have developed the so-called "political offensive" in conjunction with the conduct of the "merchandise war." At the same time, they have resorted to threats, intimidation and military attacks while carrying out economic sabotage; fomenting national disunity; wearing out our national defense potentials; stirring up indignation among the people against our party and state; corrupting our cadres; undermining our organizations, weakening our Armed Forces; sowing disunity among our cadres, army and people; driving a wedge between our country and the Soviet Union, Laos, Cambodia and other socialist countries; and creating opportunities for planting agents, buying our men to serve as

their lackeys and hatching reactionary organizations. The reactionary forces have also organized, fostered, trained and equipped Vietnamese reactionaries living in exile in foreign countries and have infiltrated them into our territory by many routes. Carrying with them weapons, radio transmitters and counterfeit banknotes, these infiltrators have established contact and joined hands with spies and reactionaries hiding in the country, as in the cases of Le Quoc Tuyen, Mai Van Hanh, Vo Dai Ton, Hoang Co Minh...which we, through coordination with our Lao and Cambodian friends, have unmasked and tried publicly.

These facts indicate that far from giving up its dark schemes, the enemy is ceaselessly resorting to insidious maneuvers in an attempt to undermine our revolution and to recklessly wage a large-scale war of aggression if conditions permit. The struggle between us and the enemy to determine "who will triumph over whom" in the struggle between the socialist and capitalist paths is very fierce and intense and involves very complicated and interrelated factors. Therefore, the 6th Party Congress has asserted once again that while giving first priority to socialist construction, "let our entire party, people and Armed Forces develop the combined strength of the nation and society, resolutely defeat the enemy's multifaceted war of destruction and work out plans to insure victory over the enemy under all circumstances."¹ It is important to fully realize the rigorous requirements of national security and defense, to have a clear head when it comes to dealing with the enemy and to thoroughly understand the interrelation and mutual effect of the two strategic tasks of our country at present. It is necessary to keep these points in mind and take measures for helping all echelons, sectors and localities correctly implement these two tasks.

Given the current national situation, the defense of the fatherland and socialist construction call for efforts to defeat, first of all, the enemy's multifaceted war of destruction and dark schemes aimed at weakening our strength.

So long as the enemy continues to adopt a hostile policy toward our revolution, we need to carry out this task on an urgent and long-term basis. The struggle between us and the enemy is very wide in scope and very fierce in intensity. It is also very intricate and sophisticated. The reason is because the enemy often tries to hide himself behind ordinary people and facts. The enemy's acts of sabotage often come between, coincide with or hide behind various negative cases in society. It is very difficult to tell the difference between the enemy's acts of sabotage and the wrongdoings of degenerate, deviant elements or even the manifestations of our poor socioeconomic management.... It is often not easy to reach a conclusion. Of course, we should not make a blanket assertion by saying that all negative cases in society involve the enemy sabotage acts. Yet, we should not lessen our vigilance.

Realities indicate that to make our struggle against the enemy's multifaceted war of destruction more effective, instead of taking separate steps, we should adopt concerted and uniform measures and achieve the close coordination between various echelons and sectors.

First of all, it is necessary to speed up efforts to conduct propaganda and educational work so as to help our cadres and people heighten vigilance, making all people fully aware of the enemy's insidious plots and maneuvers in the present situation, and of the contents and measures of the struggle against the enemy. We should firmly grasp the viewpoint of using "the people as a base," rely on the people to struggle against the enemy and, at the same time, on the basis of generally reviewing past experiences take appropriate measures to bring into play the integrated strength of proletarian dictatorship, especially the internal affairs sector in which the People's Public Security Force and Army must assume the key role. Although the struggle takes place countrywide, emphasis is particularly placed on the targeted areas, the border provinces, cities, concentrated economic zones, and economic and cultural centers. Close coordination must be organized to uniformly conduct the struggle in the military, political, economic, cultural and social domains. To positively support the struggle against the enemy sabotage, we must effectively struggle to reduce negative phenomena in society, victoriously conduct the campaign to purify the party organizations and state machinery and enhance their militancy and to purify social relations. We must take the initiative in our offensive against the enemy, properly and promptly suppress all crimes and closely coordinate with the Lao and Cambodian peoples to assure the security for each individual country and for all the three countries on the Indochina Peninsula.

All party and administrative echelons from the central down to the grassroots levels must regard the tasks of providing leadership for and directing the struggle against the enemy's multifaceted war of sabotage as one of their important and regular duties in the cause of consolidating national defense and security. All projections concerning economic, cultural and social construction must be guided by specific plans designed to insure security against enemy sabotage.

Along with struggling against the enemy's multifaceted war of sabotage, our entire party, people and army must also actively and urgently consolidate and strengthen our country's national defense and security capabilities, making sure that it is always ready and alert to cope with all situations created by the enemy. This is also one of the most important tasks in the national defense undertaking.

Our Sixth Party Congress resolution points out: "We must thoroughly understand and correctly adopt the view that "the entire people take part in national construction and defense" and "persistently comply with and concretize the party military line in the stage of

national construction and defense."² The party's current military line is one that advocates an all-people national defense, building the people's armed forces and undertaking the people's war for national defense. Today, although the situation and requirements are different from before, the all-people national defense line and the people's security line still need to be thoroughly understood and creatively implemented, taking into account the lesson of "regarding the people as the root."

We must continue to firmly grasp the fundamental concept—which always influences our national defense policy—of "using a small force to defeat a larger one." Our country's invading enemies usually come from big countries whose numerical strength is great and whose economic and military potentials are many times larger than ours. Therefore, we must base our national defense and security strengths on the strength of the entire population, a combined strength derived from all fields—political, economic, cultural, social, national defense and security—and also from domestic strength combined with epochal strength. This is a fundamental concept of our party and also an art of generating strength in our nation's historic tradition of national defense.

Given the current situation, what is most important is that we must teach every one to fully understand that national construction must be linked with national defense, trying to come up with practical plans and specific regulations capable of ensuring the readiness of not only the army but also of the entire country—covering every echelon, every sector and every locality—to cope with all contingencies. Managerial cadres from the central down to local and grassroots levels must study to improve their scientific, technical and managerial knowledge while profoundly studying the party's military and security lines to acquire necessary knowledge about the building of all-people national defense, people's security and people's war for national defense in accordance with requirements set for each subject. It is necessary to insert into the main training program, and insure that students understand the need for, the conduct of indoctrination on national defense and security at various party schools and public schools, including general education and vocational middle schools and colleges. We must urgently perfect efforts to institutionalize the duty and rights of citizens toward the cause of national defense into specific policies to emphasize the duty and honor of each citizen and the sense of social justice toward this sacred mandate.

We must, in practice, also prepare and build step by step the array of people's war and people's security, trying to make it increasingly steadfast. On the basis of planning national construction activities, we must carry out national defense planning. Although these two kinds of planning are different in essence, they are integral parts and form a single whole. This is because the word construction implies the meaning of defense and it is for the sake of construction that defense is carried out. All

socio-economic plans, both long-term and short-term, national and local, must be linked with national defense and security plans. In combining economic construction with national defense and security and vice versa, we must affirm those viewpoints which are correct and criticize those which are erroneous. We should not pay attention merely to immediate economic interest without taking into account or attaching adequate importance to the need to guarantee national defense and security. Conversely, we should not attach importance solely to our national defense and security priorities without promoting economic development.

In addition to attending to production and life, each economic sector and each economic, cultural and social project or establishment must pay attention to its capabilities to serve national defense and security and must shift its course of action when a war situation arises. On the basis of building step by step modern industries, strengthening the material bases of socialism, we must enhance our capabilities to insure technical equipment for the armed forces, building step by step the national defense industry system to guarantee self-support of equipment and to meet essential requirements of national defense and security.

One question of decisive importance for consolidating national defense and security is that we must strive to build comprehensively steadfast and well-defended people's security fortifications in the provinces (cities) and districts. We must also build and consolidate various systems of combat villages, combat hamlets and combat wards as well as various people's security networks.

Our People's Armed Forces that serve as the core force in national defense, must be attentively built firm and strong, consistent with the conditions in the country and the requirements of national defense under all circumstances. The People's Army must be continually built in the direction of being increasingly standardized and modernized. Its overall quality must be ever better each passing day and its political quality must serve as a base. Its organization must be rational, balanced, compact, strong and relevant to immediate combat requirements, the long-term national defense plan and realities in the country. Discipline must be strict and combat readiness and strength must be high. The People's Army must have well-seasoned and high quality regular forces and powerful reserve forces which are closely administered and always ready to be mobilized rapidly whenever required by the situation. In the present situation, we must pay all the more attention to building the reserve forces that can be mobilized comprehensively to fulfill their role. At present, another pressing requirement of decisive significance is to build a contingent of party cadres in the Army. These cadres must have good qualities and ethics, firm political background and a level of leadership, command and management ability on a par with their duty importance. This is a key task in building the Army. At the same time, we should study, amend and satisfactorily implement the law on officers and the various

policies and systems for army cadres in the new situation. The party building, political and ideological tasks in the Army should receive proper attention. Some issues should be improved to suit the new situation and to help oppose negative phenomena.

Moreover, we should intensify the task of securing equipment and technical service for the Armed Forces and replenish their facilities and other outfits in a balanced and uniform manner. Utmost effort should be exerted to insure good living conditions for troops and materials in kind for national defense as prescribed and approved by the state. We must improve and adequately implement the various rear policies of the Army and care for the livelihood of, and arrange jobs for, those cadres and combatants who have fulfilled their military service with the regular Army.

The Army must engage in productive labor and economic construction in order to contribute to improving troop welfare and turning out more material wealth for society. This must be regarded as a strategic task of the army.

Militia and self-defense forces must continue to be consolidated and strengthened in the direction of improving their integrated qualities with political quality at the core. They must improve their combat readiness so that they can fight victoriously to protect their relevant localities and establishments. They must closely cooperate with security forces and public security agents in satisfactorily insuring public order and security for production.

As an essential revolutionary armed force in the struggle for the defense of national security and for the maintenance of public order and security, the People's Public Security Force must be built into a truly clean, steadfast and standard one in the advance toward modernization. They must be absolutely loyal to the fatherland and the people and must have their agents firmly planted among the masses, their professional knowledge increasingly improved and the lifestyle incorruptible and wholesome. They must try to truly become a trusted and sharp tool of the party and state.

Like the general revolutionary undertaking, the strengthening of national defense and security in our country has a special relationship with the two fraternal countries of Laos and Cambodia. In the past as well as the present, the enemy tends to use the territory of one of these countries as a staging base for their attacks on another country. The national defense and security situation in each country is therefore interrelated and interacts. Together with the two fraternal countries, we must strengthen our unity, achieve close cooperation and promote mutual assistance to firmly defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of each country and of the three countries as a whole. Meanwhile, we must improve the quality and the effectiveness of our all-round cooperation with the Soviet Union and other

socialist countries. We must cooperate with all progressive forces in struggling perseveringly for peace and stability in the region, thus contributing to safeguarding world peace.

At a time when the international situation is complex and the national situation is beset with difficulties, there have been many heavy duties arising from the national defense task, requiring us to renovate our thinking and our working attitude and to develop our creativity and greater efforts. Only with the attentive leadership of various party committee echelons, the active efforts on the part of various administrative echelons and the participation in the spirit of patriotism and socialist awareness of our entire people and army can this task be implemented satisfactorily.

Footnotes

1. "The Party Central Committee's Political Report at the Sixth Party Congress," TAP CHI CONG SAN, January 1987, p 33.

2. Ibid.

Some Basic Military Concepts of the Party at Present

42100009c Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese No 4, Apr 88 pp 11-15

[Article by Professor Colonel General Hoang Minh Thao, director of the Advanced Military Academy]

[Text] The party's basic military concepts governing the people's war for national defense are part of the party's general political, economic and social concepts which, altogether, form the guidelines of the revolution, involve all aspects of our social life and are designed to help our people successfully carry out socialist construction and firmly defend the socialist Vietnam fatherland. The success or failure of our past efforts to defend the fatherland depends entirely on how well we have mastered and implemented these major concepts of the party. Given the current situation, if we want to successfully defeat the enemy's multi-faceted war of destruction and insure victory over the enemy under all circumstance, then we must possess a better knowledge of the party's basic military concepts governing the people's war for national defense in the new stage. Only basic concepts will be covered here.

1. Developing a firm and strong all-people national defense system and getting the nation ready for the anti-aggression struggle.

Developing a firm and strong all-people national defense system and getting the nation ready for the anti-aggression struggle is a major policy and a fundamental concept laid down by our party to help our people successfully carry out socialist construction and firmly defend the socialist Vietnam fatherland. Through the Fourth,

Fifth and Sixth Party Congresses, our party has increasingly improved the contents of all-people national defense policy to match it with the development of the socialist revolution nationwide. Our party's concept of a firm and strong all-people national defense system is scientifically well founded and supported by diversified and sound facts. As we all know, one of the great Lenin's theories is as follows: defending socialism as if it were a country is a historic necessity. To cope with the blockade and harassment directed against the newly established Soviet state by capitalism in an attempt to get rid of the early factor of mankind's socialist realism, Lenin developed Marx and Engels' concept of people's war with special emphasis on the people's role in the struggle to defend their socialist fatherland. He said: "There can be no national defense capabilities unless the people display great courage and boldly and resolutely affect major economic reforms."¹ In addition, we also know that during several thousand years of building the country, our forefathers had always considered national defense a permanent task for our people to carry out at all times. The motto of "national construction must be coupled with national defense" has served as a principle governing the survival and development of our nation. Over the past 40 years or more since the August 1945 revolution, our party has inherited and applied those valuable concepts to the war against foreign aggression for national liberation and the struggle for national defense in the southwestern and northern border areas. Not only has our party correctly applied these Marxist-Leninist concepts of people's war and all-people national defense but it has also made considerable efforts to further develop and enrich them.

Given the new requirements of the current struggle for national defense, it can be said that to develop a strong and firm all-people national defense means to conduct propaganda and educational work among all strata of the people—especially among workers and peasants—so as to give them a basic notion about and essential knowledge of all-people national defense and struggle for national defense based on profound patriotism and deep love for socialism. It also means to organize the people into highly motivated political and armed forces capable of defending the socialist fatherland and to develop strong spiritual and material qualities as well as manpower and material resources to meet every requirement of the nation. All those forces and qualities must be ready for mobilization according to uniform, tight and quick plans so they can create a combined strength and help wage a people's war to defend the fatherland should the need arise.

The development of an all-people national defense system calls for the implementation of the following key tasks:

Developing national defense forces. The all-people national defense forces include the people's political forces and the People's Armed Forces.

The people's political forces—which include all mass organizations of the party with the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union serving as the backbone—are all member organizations of the Vietnam Fatherland Front that have been firmly established from the grassroots to central level under the leadership of various party committee echelons. These organizations are responsible for furnishing education on tasks related to productive labor, socialist construction and national defense and launching revolutionary movements for every domain of activity in each locality with the aim of mobilizing all the intellect and energy of the entire people for the cause of socialist construction and national defense. These organizations can, under suitable forms, mobilize human and material resources to support the people's war against aggression and participate in behind-the-war-zone or local people's warfare activities when a war arises. As Uncle Ho put it: "Our people's unanimity can be molded into a brass wall around the fatherland. The enemy will be defeated before this wall, no matter how wicked and cunning he is."² The people's war against the U.S. war of destruction in the northern part of our country in the years 1960-70 attested to the strength of people's warfare in modern times. In combination with the three categories of relatively well-equipped troops and the assistance of various fraternal countries, especially the Soviet Union, the intellect and energy of our people totally frustrated the combat tactics involving the use of air and naval forces and most modern war means by the U.S. imperialists.

Developing national defense forces.

National defense potentiality is created by a combination of political-moral, economic-cultural, scientific-technical and military potentialities.

Political-moral potentiality relies on the success in shaping a new society and on the awareness of the sense of nationalism and ideal of socialism among all members of society. It is also the results of the effort to constantly enhance the military and leading role of all party organizations, increase the responsibility and management efficiency of the proletarian dictatorship state and insure social democratization and unity among all fraternal nationalities in the country. It is these successes which create the confidence, will power and moral quality, thus enabling us to willingly make sacrifices for the defense of the socialist fatherland. In modern people's warfare, the political-moral factor still remains the basis and orientation for material strength.

Economic-cultural and scientific-technical potentialities rely mainly on the achievements in accelerating production, developing science and technology and shaping a new type of socialist culture. It is these achievements which create a comprehensive source of materials that is increasingly sufficient for social life, for reserve and for use whenever a war arises in the country. These achievements can also maintain the material production force during the process of war and meet the needs arising

from a war. These potentialities also serve as a basis for creating a modern national defense industry which is highly capable of improving military equipment and are the results of international cooperation and mutual assistance among fraternal socialist countries.

Military potentiality consists of the combat capabilities of the people's armed forces, the ability to mobilize the entire people to participate in fighting the aggressors, the actual ability of all social organizations to serve war purposes and the battle layout of people's warfare and capacity of the national defense industry. In some battles during the wars against the French colonialists, the U.S. imperialists and the expansionist Chinese aggressors, thanks to the combat capabilities of our armed forces—which at times involved only self-defense militiamen—and the good combat layout of people's warfare, we were able to develop our military potentiality, thus defeating the enemy troops.

The plan for shifting the country from peacetime to wartime. This is an important content of the task of building up the all-people national defense, which is aimed at transforming the strength of all-people national defense into the strength of resistance against the aggressors when war arises. This is also a unified planning system from the central to local and grassroots levels, which includes plans for national and local defense, plans for mobilizing resistance forces, plans for mustering the economy in support of the war, plans for shifting the economy and all social activities to wartime and plans for civilian defense. This plan should be prepared in a careful and practical manner with special attention being given to insuring that everybody is familiar with such a change.

2. Making the three categories of troops of the People's Armed Forces strong and increasingly standard and modern. Making the reserve force powerful.

The Armed Forces constitute the mainstay of the all-people national defense and serve as a core force in which all people can take part to fight the aggressors. They also play a key role in annihilating the opposing Armed Forces and scoring decisive victories in a war.

Building up the three categories of troops of the Armed Forces is a fundamental viewpoint and a traditional policy of our party. That policy has stemmed from the use of the viewpoints concerning revolutionary violence, the "armament of the working class and revolutionary masses," and building of a new-style army of the laboring people that reflects the class nature of Marxism-Leninism. This policy is also the inheritance of our ancestors' tradition of organizing forces to fight the aggressors for the defense of the country—coordinating combat activities of soldiers from the imperial court and with those of full-time or part-time troops in various precincts, villages and hamlets to make both local and mobile forces strong. With that tradition, our people have recorded many brilliant military exploits in history.

It is necessary to build up and organize the force of the three categories of troops, develop the role and effect of these troops along with arming all people and launching an all-people movement to fight the aggressors and dexterously combine local people's warfare with the war that is fought by various regular army corps. This is an efficacious method of improving the fighting strength of both our Armed Forces and people and also the most effective measure to develop to a high degree the just factor and successfully solve the biggest contradiction of the war against aggression in our country, a small nation with a relatively small standing force compelled to withstand a large invading army from big countries.

This fact also raises a question of strategic nature: from the just factor of war, we could launch and organize an all-people resistance movement, thus creating aggregate strength for conducting a deep and broad people's war. And from this war, we discovered many highly effective fighting methods and measures, making it possible for us to defeat a large army with a small force and create conditions for the war steering organ to have clear-sighted viewpoints and guidance and correct social policies.

Today, to build a steadfast People's Armed Forces, we must correctly resolve the relationship between quantity and quality, between requirements and capabilities and between personnel on the one hand and weapons, technical equipment and material bases on the other. Nowadays, the qualities of the members of the Armed Forces are created by many factors, especially by political qualities which involve patriotism, a love of socialism, fighting will, a determination to sacrifice oneself for national independence and socialism, a sense of self-imposed discipline and abilities to perform assigned technical combat duties. These qualities can be created, on the one hand, by the fruits of the arduous training efforts given by the Armed Forces and, on the other hand, by the fruits of comprehensive socialist construction, including the building of new socialist men for society and the implementation of various socialist policies of the party. The qualities of the members of the Armed Forces can also depend largely on the qualities of their weapons, technical equipment and material bases. Today, it is clear that weapons, science and technology can play an important role in resolving many problems in combat and can help score victories.

3. Conduct a comprehensive people's war in modern time with the participation of the entire people and with an alliance of forces.

If the enemy wages a war of aggression against our country, the strength of the all-people national defense will be mustered for the conduct of a people's war for national defense. Led by our party, the people's war for national defense at present is a just struggle with a profound national and class nature and it is being undertaken with experiences learned throughout the course of our history and with the determination of a victorious nation.

This war must be undertaken under conditions where there are advance, comprehensive preparations—including preparations for a fighting force, tactics, potentials and military art—to be made in our country together with efforts to achieve close and systematic cooperation with the revolutions of the fraternal countries of Laos and Cambodia. This war is taking place against a background where the socialist system, thanks to its reforms and renovation, has acquired a great potential, where the world's revolutionary force has been strengthened and where the trend toward peace has widely developed. Although our force is now stronger than before, given the current balance of forces between us and the enemy we will have to continue to adopt the tactic of using the small against the big and the few against the many. This is a very big problem to be resolved in the process of conducting the war.

Developing the diverse experience of our nation's historic struggle against foreign aggression, our party has advocated conducting a comprehensive people's war in the modern era with the participation of the entire people and with an alliance of forces. Complying with this advocacy, we will be able to develop our existing capabilities and advantages in order to create an integrated strength of the entire people, of the socialist system and of our times and, at the same time, to worsen the inherent problems encountered by the enemy in their unjust war and to weaken and eventually disintegrate their strength. Thus, although with a limited force, we will be able to create a good stature and opportunities and then transform them into our ever stronger force and strength with which to gain greater successes right from the very outset. This process should be continued until we can deliver a decisive blow capable of totally frustrating the enemy schemes. This is also the way to solve the greatest problem of war.

But whether these successes can become a dream-come-true, whether they can soon arrive, and at what magnitudes they may be will depend chiefly on subjective conditions. They are the degree of steadfastness of the all-people national defense and the degree of preparedness that we must have in the prewar period. They also include the degree of the revolutionary vigilance of our entire party, people and army, and especially the sensitivity of our policies and lines as well as the creativity of our war steering organ in developing its art of war.

The party's military concepts are not inflexible and unchangeable theories but rather guiding thoughts for our entire society to develop its great creativity. Their vitality and truth can be fostered by a love for the reality of life. From the reality of our diverse and vivid struggle, we supplement and develop it, trying to invigorate its vitality. This approach can be achieved only with the contributions of the thoughts and actions by various party and administration organizations and by a large number of our cadres, combatants and people.

Footnotes

1. V.I. Lenin: "Complete Works," Tien Bo Publishing House, Moscow, 1976, Volume 34, p 263.

2. Ho Chi Minh: "Selected Works," Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1980, Volume I, p 419.

Beijing's Outdated Gunboat Policy

42100009d Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese No 4, Apr 88 pp 16-20, 36

[Article by Le Minh Nghia, deputy director of the Border Department of the Council of Ministers]

[Text] Since late January 1988, many Chinese warships have conducted regular operations near Vietnam's Truong Sa [Spratley] Archipelago. Chinese troops have illegally occupied Chu Thap, Chau Vien and a number of other coral reefs. Vietnamese sailors were killed and Vietnamese freighters sunk in their motherland's territorial waters. The Chinese authorities brazenly call these operations "routine activities" and claim that Truong Sa and Hoang Sa [Paracel] Archipelagoes are under their control.

What is the truth?

It must be seen that the Chinese authorities have left no stone unturned in an attempt to support their ambition with legal documents. Nevertheless, their pieces of evidence all failed to meet the norms of international law and proved to be false.

According to present-day international law, territorial possession has legal value only when it involves possession and exploitation by a state itself. Moreover, this possession must be real and not just in name. Real possession means continual presence and concrete actions to exercise one's sovereignty. International law recognizes a nation's sovereignty only if this sovereignty is established through peaceful and legal means. All attempts to use violence or illegal means to establish one's territorial sovereignty are unacceptable.

The Chinese authorities' weakest point is that they can in no way prove when they began their occupation of "Xisha" (Hoang Sa) and "Nansha" (Truong Sa) and how they had actually exercised their sovereignty over these two archipelagoes.

After strenuous research through countless historical documents and books, the Chinese authorities could only come up with four incidents in nearly 900 years to prove that they had actually exercised sovereignty over these two archipelagoes. Unfortunately, three of the four incidents have nothing to do with the two archipelagoes. As for the incident involving the landing of troops on a number of islands of the Hoang Sa Archipelago in 1909 from two Chinese gunboats at the order of the authorities in Guangdong, this was but a momentary action

because the troops left after an overnight stay there. Moreover, the incident occurred when the Hoang Sa Archipelago was already owned by Vietnam, then under French control. It can be said that this incident marked the first attempt by the Chinese authorities in Guangdong and Guangxi Provinces to annex the Hoang Sa Archipelago. How can it be said that this incident is evidence of the Chinese authorities' real possession of the Hoang Sa Archipelago?

Before the beginning of the 20th century, no country—China included—had shown any reaction to Vietnam's occupation of and control over the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa Archipelagoes. We have sufficient proof meeting the norms of international law to prove that Vietnam occupied the Truong Sa and Hoang Sa Archipelagoes when they were not owned by any countries and that Vietnam has continually exercised her sovereignty over these two archipelagoes.

Up to the beginning of the 20th century, it was said (and even drawn in maps) in many official or semiofficial Chinese documents that China's territory extended no further than Hainan Island. The "Great Qing Empire, Complete Work" map, published in 1905 and re-edited in 1910, put China's southernmost point at Hainan Island. The "Chinese Geographical Book," published in 1906, said: China's southernmost point is located at Chau Nhai, Qiongzhou (otherwise known as Hainan), at 18.13 degrees north parallel.

During the twenties and thirties, the Chinese Kuomintang authorities began claiming sovereignty over the Hoang Sa Archipelago. Yet, they turned down the French authorities' proposal that the issue be brought before an international arbitration court for settlement. After World War II, they dispatched troops to occupy part of the two archipelagoes and then pulled them out.

The PRC officially claimed sovereignty over the two archipelagoes in Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai's statement dated 15 August 1951, which said: "Just like the Nam Sa, Trung Sa and Dong Sa Archipelagoes, the Tay Sa (Hoang Sa) Archipelago and the Nanwei Island (Truong Sa) have always belonged to China's territory."

In 1956, the Chinese authorities sent troops to occupy the eastern part of the Hoang Sa Archipelago. The incident occurred after the Saigon administration's failure to dispatch troops in time to replace the French troops there. Meanwhile, Taiwan also committed troops to occupy Ba Dinh Island of the Truong Sa Archipelago.

In 1959, Chinese troops attempted a landing on a group of islands in the western part of the Hoang Sa Archipelago. Eighty-two men and five armed vessels (disguised as fishing boats) were captured by the Saigon administration.

In January 1974, with the tacit agreement of the United States, the Chinese authorities dispatched troops to occupy the rest of the Hoang Sa Archipelago at the very moment Vietnam was concentrating her efforts on fighting off the U.S. imperialists. Ever since then, the Chinese authorities have tried by all means to consolidate and turn Hoang Sa into a military base. They have just decided to reorganize Hainan Island into a province with Vietnam's Truong Sa and Hoang Sa Archipelagoes being incorporated into the list of "districts" of the new province.

The reorganization of Hainan Island was carried out in a constitutional way in compliance with China's legislative procedures. Extensive propaganda has also been conducted in a bid to advertise Hainan's open door policy aimed at promoting economic development. The truth is that, under the cover of openness, the Chinese authorities are striving to develop Hainan into an economic facility and a military base strong enough to be used as a stepping stone for implementing their dark scheme aimed at controlling the Eastern Sea, thus posing a threat to peace and security in the region. Faced with this dark scheme, the neighboring countries and other world nations, being very alert, have always been on the lookout.

From the first official claim of sovereignty over Hoang Sa and Truong Sa in 1951 to the encroachments on these two archipelagoes in 1974 and 1988 respectively, the Chinese authorities have, over the past 37 years, acted very persistently and consistently. What have they tried to do? They have tried to carry out the policy of expansion and hegemony toward the Eastern Sea and even the Pacific, a fact fully and openly admitted in a famous statement by Chairman Mao Tse-tung at the conference of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee Military Commission in 1958 as follows: "Actually, there is no peace in the Pacific now, nor will peace come in the future unless this ocean is put under our control."

Regional and world public opinion has seen the true color of expansionism and hegemonism. The Chinese authorities claim that the two archipelagoes have always belonged to them, that "China's sovereignty has been universally recognized," and that this part of their territory was illegally occupied by France and Japan. Why is it that three international conference were held during and after World War II where the question of occupied territories was raised, but none of these conferences recognized China's sovereignty over these two archipelagoes? Besides, China attended two of these conferences in her capacity as one of the powerful allied countries!

The first conference in Cairo in November 1943 was attended by the state leaders of the United States, the United Kingdom and the Republic of China. Both France and Vietnam were not present at the conference to protect their sovereignty. Nevertheless, the Cairo declaration asserted: "All the territories Japan has stolen

from the Chinese, such as Manchuria, Formosa and the Pescadores, shall be restored to the Republic of China." The agreement made no mention of China's sovereignty over the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa Archipelagoes.

At the Potsdam Conference in August 1945, the document signed by the leaders of the United States, the United Kingdom and China on 26 July reaffirmed: "The terms of the Cairo Declaration shall be implemented."

The San Francisco Conference in 1951 with the participation of 51 countries to sign a peace treaty with Japan also affirmed: Japan shall return Formosa and the Pescadores to China. Meanwhile, the agreement made a separate mention of Truong Sa and Hoang Sa and affirmed that Japan had to renounce her claim of sovereignty over these two archipelagoes.

It is worth noting that the Chinese side hoped that its statement dated 15 August 1951 would have an impact on the decision of the San Francisco Conference. Yet, China failed in her attempt to do so. Meanwhile, Tran Van Huu, of the delegation of the state of Vietnam at the San Francisco Conference, "asserted the long-standing national sovereignty of Vietnam over the Truong Sa and Hoang Sa Archipelagoes." This statement raised no objections nor reservations from any country.

Thus, under the provisions of the San Francisco Conference, just like the restoration of Formosa and the Pescadores to the Republic of China, Hoang Sa and Truong Sa shall be restored to Vietnam following Japan's occupation of these two archipelagoes through the use of force.

These were three official international conferences of legal value. None of them said that the two archipelagoes were under Chinese sovereignty. So, some specialized organization must have convened a specialized conference to distort the truth. Therefore, the conclusion of such a conference had no legal value. The decisions reached by specialized conferences definitely do not mean recognition or rejection of territorial sovereignty. This is a part of international law and practices.

The Chinese authorities have quoted a number of maps, books and printed materials published by China and other countries, Vietnam included, to back up their claim.

The important point here is whether these arguments are based on international law or not. According to the Chinese authorities, it could be that in the course of drawing maps or compiling books and other printed materials, cartographers or groups of cartographers might, intentionally or unintentionally, or simply by mistake, change a few details of their projects and therefore transferred part of the territory of one country to another one!

No! This is something totally inconsistent with international law and practices. This really means underestimation of public judgment. Arbitrators all over the world know too well that when it comes to settling conflicts, all sides concerned try to quote maps and documents, including the ones compiled from unfounded sources or even fabrications, in such a way as to benefit their claims. Therefore, arbitrators always exert utmost caution before reaching conclusions. In some cases, they altogether disregarded the value of some maps no matter how numerous and highly valued these publications were. These are historical facts.

Of course, there are maps with legal value. These include the ones recognized by the signatories or the ones attached to international agreements. As an example, let's cite the map attached to the San Francisco Agreement in 1951, which clearly indicated that Formosa and the Pescadores belonged to the Republic of China and just left the sovereignty over Truong Sa and Hoang Sa "undetermined." This was something unacceptable to Vietnam. Yet, at least, this is proof that China's sovereignty over the Truong Sa and Hoang Sa Archipelagoes has not been recognized by any international legal documents.

China has on many occasions cited Vietnam's note in 1958 regarding China's 12 nautical mile territorial waters and the statement in 1965 of the Vietnamese government protesting the United States' delimitation of the fighting zone of the U.S. armed forces in Indochina. On the strength of these two documents, China holds that its sovereignty over the two archipelagoes has been recognized by Vietnam itself.

What is the real meaning of the above-mentioned documents?

In its note dated 14 September 1958 to China, Vietnam acknowledged and supported China's 12 nautical mile territorial waters. Except for Vietnam's pledge to comply with China's 12 nautical mile territorial waters, the note made no mention of China's sovereignty over the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa Archipelagoes.

During the anti-U.S. national salvation struggle, China was the "trustworthy rear" of the Vietnamese people. Therefore, in its statement in 1965, the Vietnamese government expressed the desire to firmly maintain and further consolidate the solidarity between the two countries for the sake of the vital interests of the Vietnamese people and the common anti-U.S. war of resistance. The statement was not meant to be a recognition of China's sovereignty over part of our national territory. Moreover, the statement was made at a time when the two archipelagoes had not been put under the direct control of the people's administration. After 1954, under the terms of the Geneva Agreement, South Vietnam was put under the control of the Saigon administration. Therefore, on the strength of legal documents and common practices, the two archipelagoes were put under the

direct control and protection of the Saigon administration and later on, the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam.

Thus, it is crystal clear that the contents of the above mentioned documents were very precise and did not imply any transfer of territory, which is always accompanied by negotiations and agreements signed by the authorized representatives of the two governments. Moreover, these agreements must be ratified before they can go into effect. The Chinese authorities are well aware of this fact, yet they have deliberately acted according to their own hegemonistic ambitions. World public opinion knows all too well the true nature of this issue.

To form a theoretical basis for its expansionist and hegemonistic policy, first of all toward the Eastern Sea, China has invented a highly "modern" border doctrine which was introduced in the 3 April 1987 issue of the Chinese newspaper LIBERATION ARMY DAILY. According to this newspaper, China makes a distinction between two concepts: geographic border and strategic border. Geographic border is delineated on the basis of internationally recognized national territory and the corresponding territorial waters and air space. Strategic border reflects the aggregate strength of a country.

China holds that if a country cannot exercise effective control over all of its territorial waters and air space, its strategic border shall, for a long period of time, be less extensive than its geographic border. Thus, the geographic border shall be moved back to the strategic border, and that country shall lose part of its territory. On the contrary, any country capable of exercising effective and permanent control over its strategic border, especially on land and at sea, that extends beyond its geographic border, may expand its geographic border.

China says it must move its "national gate" from its geographic border to its strategic border. It contends that since "its natural resources on land are limited, it must grab a larger living space!"

According to China's reasoning, the strategic border guarantees several things, namely living space, security space and space for scientific-technological and economic development.

What is the true nature of the new border doctrine mentioned above? Setting aside all complicated arguments, this doctrine clearly reveals the advocacy of expansion by force.

Reading carefully the reasoning of Chinese military strategists, one cannot help but see that their strategic border doctrine is a logical extension of the "three-worlds" doctrine, which serves as the theoretical basis for the strategy of global expansion, and that the border doctrine serves as the theoretical basis for the border expansion doctrine—first of all, expansion of territorial waters.

It is fair to say that China has a tradition of theoretical development, but such theories as the "three worlds theory" and the "border doctrine" are heavily tainted with chauvinism, reek of expansionism and are extremely outdated. These are but a jumble of preposterous arguments. Having already suffered from Hitler's "lebensraum" doctrine, mankind now cannot but be worried by the newly invented ideas of the forces that are hell-bent on the path of hegemonism.

Along with its high-handed military activities in the Eastern Sea, China's promotion of its border doctrine is again casting a dark shadow in the skies of Indochina and Southeast Asia. In a world that is ever undertaking changes in accordance with the trends of dialogue and detente, China's words and deeds are, as a matter of fact, extremely isolated.

Faced with the Chinese authorities' outdated gunboat policy, Vietnam has persistently pursued its policy of using dialogue and negotiation to solve unsettled problems, including the debate over the two archipelagoes. We sincerely wish to restore the long-standing friendship and good neighborliness between the Vietnamese and Chinese peoples. Therefore, it is very easy to understand why broad segments of the world public opinion have promptly given sympathy and support for Vietnam's good will. World public opinion has also demanded a favorable response from the Chinese side.

So far, the Chinese authorities have stubbornly stood by their position as a "world power" and rejected all of Vietnam's peace initiatives. They have continued to swim against the tide and to turn their back on the trends of development in this era by resorting to force to turn the Eastern Sea into their own lake in a bid to implement their expansionist scheme. As a result, the situation in the Eastern Sea is still very complicated. It is necessary for our armed forces and people to watch the Chinese authorities closely and to heighten our vigilance in the face of their hostile and warmongering acts. We are determined to mobilize all our forces to defend the fatherland's sacred sovereignty.

Some Views on Developing Commodity Production in Our Country¹

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[Article by Che Viet Tan, deputy director of the Economics Department of the Central Committee]

[Text] The realities of the past several decades of economic construction in the socialist countries have increasingly proven: a commodity economy is not the form but the fundamental essence of the socialist economy, is an economy which is built and developed on the basis of the achievements of the new eras of technology that have been and are continuing to emerge in the new age.

The Sixth Congress of the Party asserted: "The process of advancing from small-scale production to large-scale, socialist production in our country is the process of converting our still highly subsistent economy into a commodity economy. We are managing, through plans, a commodity production economy with the characteristics of the period of transition."

I. The Differences in Nature and Mode of Activity of a Commodity Economy Under Socialism and Under Capitalism

A commodity economy, regardless of which social system it is under, has its own objective categories and economic laws, such as the market, prices, the circulation of goods and money, the law of value, the law of supply and demand, competition and the need to achieve maximum profits. However, in each of the different social systems, the objectives, scopes, forms and modes of activity in the development of production and the circulation of goods differ.

The common objective of commodity production is to realize maximum profits. Under capitalism, the objectives of realizing maximum capitalist profits are to enrich the capitalist and carry out the expanded reproduction of the capitalist mode of production. Under socialism, the objectives of maximum socialist profits are to satisfy the rising needs of society and carry out the expanded reproduction of the socialist mode of production.

Under capitalism, the law of value is spontaneous in nature and plays the role of regulating the social reproduction process. In socialism, under socialist production relations, the law of planned development together with the law of value, the relationships between goods and money, market relations and so forth are applied to develop the economy, carry out expanded reproduction, implement distribution in accordance with labor and raise the standard of living.

In both capitalism and socialism, the relationship between the producer and the consumer occurs on the market through many different forms of buying and selling. However, under socialism, the relationship between the producer and the consumer is based on the socialist system of law and primarily takes the forms of cooperative relations and an alliance between the two basic classes which produce goods. This relationship is the correct combination of the interests of the working class and the interests of the class of farmers and other laborers. Of course, in the period of socialist construction, when the economy still consists of many different segments participating in the production and circulation of goods, the socialist state dynamically and reasonably regulates these interests through policies and laws.

Therefore, the commodity economy under the socialist system is a new socio-economic entity, one which gradually curtails spontaneity and increases the planned, organized nature of the economy.

II. The Main Characteristics of the Commodity Economy in Our Country Today

The commodity economy consists of many segments, among which the socialist economy, although it controls the key positions and possesses large forces, has yet to play its decisive role in the entire national economy. The private and individual economies still play an important and long-range role in the process of socialist construction in our country. This demands that the state adopt appropriate economic policies and put in place an appropriate management mechanism with the aim of tapping the capability of each sector of the economy in order to develop production forces and expand the circulation of goods.

Our country's commodity economy is still at a very low level of development and is not evenly balanced among the different regions of the country. Small-scale production still predominates and production is highly subsistent in nature. The output of products and goods is very low. The relationships between goods and money and market relations have not been fully developed. The consequences of the war and the long partitioning of the country into two different political, economic and social systems led to different material-technical bases, different production and business management methods and different producer and consumer habits among the people in the South and the North. Therefore, on the basis of principles and policies that are common to the entire country, it is necessary to establish diverse forms, establish management organizations and methods that are compatible with the specific realities of each sector, each locality and each type of basic unit.

At present, the economy is unstable and still under the heavy impact of the overseas economy and day to day changes on the international market.

III. Revamping and Developing the Commodity Economy in Our Country

The task of basic, pressing importance in stabilizing and developing the socialist socio-economic system at this time is to build a commodity economy along the following lines:

1. Rapidly liberating and developing production forces in order to produce many goods; redistributing production forces; basing major socio-economic programs on the views of commodity production; and bringing a new concept to efforts to build socialist production relations: clearly distinguishing between socialist social ownership and the use of forms of ownership and economic forms that are still necessary in order to tap each capability of the different segments of the economy.

—Rearranging the structure of production, beginning with the structure of commodity production in the countryside; accelerating the development of small-scale commodity producers in the cities; and creating domestic and foreign sources of capital with the aim of changing the structure of investments, changing the structure of the economy and carrying out industrialization (as conceived and carried out in the new industrial age), thus quickly establishing the material backbone of the commodity economy.

—Revamping the economic management mechanism: dismantling the mechanism based on bureaucratic centralism and state subsidies and shifting to the management mechanism based on economic accounting and socialist business practices.

2. Expanding economic relations with foreign countries and tapping traditional technologies and domestic potentials.

To develop and catch up to the times in light of our country's underdeveloped economy and material-technical bases, we must:

On the one hand, develop all the potentials and the combined strength of the five sectors of the economy and liberate the production capacity of all sectors and trades (agriculture, forestry, fishing...) and of the existing traditional technologies within the country. We must make full use of labor under a dynamic management mechanism which taps the strengths of each basic unit and locality, and which accelerates production and the circulation of goods and increases our exports.

On the other hand, expand our economic relations with foreign countries with a view toward quickly acquiring modern technology and applying the method of rapid industrialization, which many nations have successfully carried out in recent years. To accomplish this, it is necessary to rapidly train a corps of cadres and an increasingly large labor force capable of learning the advanced technologies of the new age and capable of producing many products and goods of high quality, products and goods that are competitive on the international market.

We must boldly open the doors to our country's economy, in an organized way, to other countries of the world, beginning with the fraternal countries of Laos and Cambodia and the socialist countries in the following fields: cooperation in domestic and foreign investments; exports-imports; the services, labor, technology and so forth so that we can make use of the strengths of the world commodity economy in capital and technology, market and business and management experience. If we do not take this approach, we will find it difficult to bring the economy from its state of backwardness and disorganization, and to reduce the gap between our country's low level of economic development and the level of economic development of other countries.

3. The state managing the commodity economy through the plan and the market.

The central tool of the management mechanism based on socialist business accounting is planning. Long-, medium- and short-term plans are used to set the goals of socialist construction during each period; define the direction of development of science and technology; give direction to investments in the different sectors and regions; give direction to overseas economic relations; guide consumption, etc. By applying the financing, banking, and monetary mechanism, the state must rapidly revamp its management and coordination process, and acquire effective macromanagement on the central level through laws and economic measures designed mainly to develop and regulate, not to control the market. The state must manage business activities in a macromanagement framework in which the state does not manage business operations by handing down orders through multiple and vertical levels of bureaucracy and by observing a maze of rules and regulations as it did previously. On the basis of respecting the legally binding nature of the plan, we must make use of economic levers and expand the integration of businesses under a "horizontal management mechanism," with only one upper level above the basic unit. In addition, there are the balancing and supplementary effects of the market.

The market is where commodity trade takes place through supply and demand, and where the value of products is realized.

The special features of the commodity economy are money, goods, competition and free trade (except for some strategic materials, the supply of which does not meet market demand, in which case sales must be made for the foreseeable future to a specific address and in accordance with the capabilities and priorities of the state). Both the buyer and the seller seek maximum gains on the market and through the market.

The socialist commodity economy is a unified entity consisting of many different economic segments. Therefore, the market of this commodity economy is also a unified market consisting of different economic segments and territorial regions. When the production and circulation of goods develop, the entire country must form one national market capable of joining the international market. The concept of separating the socialist market (the organized market) from a non-socialist market (the free market) and viewing one as opposed to the other is incorrect in theory and harmful in practice. It is the origin of the two price mechanism and subsidization. We cannot allow a situation to exist in which the economy has two markets, two prices, two types of laws and two mechanisms, which nullify each other and become the origin of the "underground economy."

The market mechanism is essentially the mechanism of free buying and selling, free trade by every conceivable method, with prices being negotiated by the buyer and

the seller. Within this mechanism, the law of value, the law of supply and demand and competition exert their impact through prices in order to regulate supply and demand.

Competition is an essential element of every commodity economy. Without competition, commodity production does not develop and there is no market. Socialist competition is fundamentally very different from capitalist competition but remains an important moving force behind the development of the commodity economy. We must organize and lead competition within the commodity production economy of socialism.

Economic monopoly is an essential element of a commodity economy, but it must be monopoly achieved through business.

Speculation is an essential phenomenon of a commodity economy when supply and demand are not in balance. Speculation leads to enormous waste. Consequently, it obstructs the circulation of money and goods. The state must establish reserves of goods and money and combine these reserves with legal constraints and measures regarding the psychology of society in order to combat speculative activities.

Asserting that our country's economy is a commodity economy essentially means that we must recognize the market and the market mechanism and not be prejudiced toward them. The central socialist state, through its macromanagement function, must make effective use of the goods and money of the national economy and use policies and laws to regulate, guide, control, master, inspect and manage the market.

The socialist economy, as a large business protected by the socialist system of law, by means of a flexible business mechanism and with powerful forces in terms of materials, goods and money in its possession, is entirely capable of being the master of the market and fully capable of crushing speculators who are raising prices and disrupting the market. When we assert the need for plan-based management of the commodity economy, we are also asserting the need to plan the economy on the basis of revamping both the contents and methods of planning.

To begin with, we must consider the market to be the object of planning, to be the basis upon which we formulate and implement the plan. The market reflects the very diverse needs of consumers in everyday life and in production with the aim of developing the domestic economy and developing economic relations with foreign countries. Thus, within a socialist commodity economy, the market is not the antithesis of the plan and does not lie outside the plan, rather, it is the object, the essence of the plan. Therefore, the plan must be consistent with the market, planning must utilize the market mechanism. This means:

—The plan must be based on studying the needs and changes of the domestic and foreign markets. Therefore, expanding the science of marketing is an essential demand, one closely associated with commodity production in all production and business units.

—We must abandon the methods of planning of the old management mechanism based on bureaucratic centralism and state subsidies, methods associated with sharing wealth and distributing material resources at very low prices, and shift to planned trade in materials and goods. When materials are in short supply as they are today, the new management mechanism has not been fully formed and some materials cannot be freely sold, planned trade by business methods is necessary to insure that the targets and the product orders of the state are fulfilled.

—On the market, the prices of goods must truly be negotiated by the buyer and the seller. Within the socialist commodity economy, plan prices are business prices. They are also prices negotiated between the producer and the consumer, negotiated against the background of the price control mechanism of the state.

4. Prices, wages, money and the national finance system:

To begin with, it is necessary to adopt the correct views toward goods, money and wages. During the period of transition in our country, it would be both wrong and harmful to maintain that goods only consist of means of consumption. Because, if the means of production are not considered to be goods, their prices cannot be calculated. Although the arable land, mines and factories which are under national ownership and managed by the state are not objects of trade, their value must still be included in the price of their products through depreciation. If their prices are not calculated, enormous waste will result. Within the socialist economy, the means of consumption, the means of production, science-technology and the economic and technical services must be considered goods. Things on which social labor has been expended but which do not directly participate in trade, such as factories, cropland, mines, forests, water sources, seaports, maritime lines, aviation routes and so forth must be treated as goods. Their value must be calculated when they participate in production and business in order to achieve full cost accounting.

Money: the new thinking is that within a commodity economy, there is not only paper money, but that it is also necessary to expand the various forms of non-cash payment. The volume of money is established on the basis of the requirements of production and the circulation of goods in light of the price scale during each period.

It is necessary to differentiate between the function of issuing money and the function of the business in money. In the immediate future, we must clearly differentiate between combating inflation and taking the initiative in issuing money to meet the need to accelerate

production and circulation. Issuing money is only a tool used to regulate the economy, not a tool used to compensate for a state budget deficit or a credit deficit. Monetary policies must be promulgated to regulate and control the activities of the domestic business in money.

Wages are the most important component of the income of the worker. Wages must be considered the price of labor, must correspond to the price scale and the purchasing power of the dong, must be sufficient to guarantee that the energy expended in labor is replenished and must be based on labor productivity and the level of national income during each period within each country. The wage system must be reorganized. We must abandon the "rigid" wage and salary systems based on the amount of time worked and implement a "flexible" wage policy of contract wages based on the results of work or the results of scientific research. The wage fund should not be calculated on the basis of the average wage under the "rigid" wage policy and a fixed number of workers, but established by means of a flexible wage policy and a policy of contracting labor by job, by product or by job deadline. There must be a bonus policy which provides high incentive for raising labor productivity. The state must adopt a mechanism which controls increases in the wage fund in order to balance it and the supply of goods with the aim of correctly implementing the principle of distribution in accordance with labor.

In principle, the prices of goods reflect their value, the relationship between supply and demand, the purchasing power of the dong and even the quality of goods. We must abandon the old way of calculating prices and the practice of setting prices from the top downward through the system of state administrative levels. The state must play the role of establishing the price setting mechanism and can set some prices and manage prices by means of effective economic measures. Within this mechanism, businessmen should form associations or establish councils consisting of producers and consumers, both individuals and units, to directly set prices. The state must enact a price control mechanism and play the role of controlling prices. The state has at its disposal reserves and laws with which to regulate prices, which include the tax and subsidization policies.

Exchange rates must be determined in accordance with the principles of the price setting mechanism and the price control mechanism of the state. Specific rates in production and business will be negotiated and determined by the producer associations and businessmen in the overseas economy to insure that export-import activities are profitable and in line with changes on the international market. State agencies must play the role of providing information and forecasts on prices and the market, controlling or taking measures to subsidize necessary export and import goods and providing regulation by means of tax policy, bonuses, foreign exchange rates and other policies.

The national finance system: clearer distinctions must be made in order to better organize the division of echelons and the establishment of financial independence and self-financing within basic units in production and business. This differs from the division of echelons based on the principle of unifying the management of the budget within the state management and the economic administration provided by the various levels of administration. A national financial policy must soon be adopted.

The requirement of a national financial policy is that it provide incentive for production and, in this way, build and expand existing sources of revenue and open many new sources of revenue. Revenue levels should be reasonable so that businessmen are still eager to expand the production and circulation of goods and, by so doing, establish increasingly large sources of revenue. The expenditure policy must be designed to build revenue sources and limit expenditures which do not generate revenues. The guidelines of the national financial policy must be: both revenues and expenditures must step up the production and circulation of goods, build and develop revenue sources and constantly increase revenue sources by encouraging production and the expansion of the circulation of goods and business activities.

In light of the basic views on the development of production within the socialist economy presented above, we feel that it is necessary to change the economic-financial professional work associated with the old mechanism in every respect—from methodology to specialized professional work—in appropriate steps in all fields and necessary to conduct good organizational and cadre work, particularly the retraining of cadres.

Footnotes

1. This article supplements and further clarifies the view that the socialist economy is a commodity production economy expressed in the article "Some Matters Concerning the Application of Market Relations in Economic Management and Planning" published in TAP CHI CONG SAN, No 10, 1983.

The Relationships Between Goods and Money and the Revamping of the Economic Management Mechanism in Our Country
42100009f Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 4, Apr 88 pp 27-31

[Article by Tran Ngoc Hien, MS in Economics]

[Text] The process of revamping the economic management mechanism is increasingly demanding a clear understanding and the successful application of the law of value and the relationships between goods and money.

To apply the relationships between goods and money under the conditions of our country today, it is necessary to take into consideration the state and the special characteristics of these relationships within an economy

that consists of many different segments and necessary to make our starting point the socio-economic goals set in the resolution of the Sixth Party Congress, thereby helping to successfully implement the resolution of the congress and the resolutions of the various party plenums. On this basis, we must set guidelines for applying the relationships between goods and money in the establishment of the management mechanism at basic economic units and the state's economic management mechanism.

1. Due to the very low starting point of the process of advancing to socialism in our country and the abnormal socioeconomic situation which exists today, the relationships between goods and money within our country's multi-segmented economy exhibits the following characteristics:

a. The level of development of the production of goods is not uniform and ranges from simple trade in the countryside to the large-scale production of enterprises in the cities. Generally speaking, the major features of the level of development of the production of goods are:

First, there is more small-scale production than large-scale production. Small-scale commodity production within industry and agriculture are meeting 80 to 90 percent of society's need for goods. The percentage of goods produced by small-scale production is large even in the cities and among export goods.

This feature demands that we give attention to applying the various forms of the relationships between goods and money to stimulate the development of commodity production and form a division of labor and trade relations with large-scale commodity production.

Secondly, there are currently more goods being circulated than produced. Because our starting point is a backward agriculture and a large subsistent economy, developing circulation and the market in order to expand the production of goods is logical. Developing foreign trade to stimulate the domestic economy is the law of economic development in our country.

This feature demands that the application of the relationships between goods and money begin in circulation and strongly orient circulation toward stimulating production and the expansion of the division of social labor. Lastly, we must closely tie circulation to production to establish the process of expanded reproduction. The danger here is making the mistake of stopping at circulation, even turning circulation into a channel for profiting by the difference in prices and setting it against production.

b. To examine the state of the relationships between goods and money today, we must also analyze the nature of these relationships. Currently, there are three types of commodity production within the economy: the commodity economy of individuals, the private, capitalist

commodity economy and the socialist commodity economy. These three types are tied to and compete with one another. Concerning the nature of these relationships and the comparison of forces among the three types of commodity production, General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh pointed out: "It is widespread for state-operated production to be inferior to collective production, for collective production to be inferior to private and individual production. This is a perverse situation" (NHAN DAN Newspaper, 1 Sep 87).

The state and the features of the relationships within our multi-segmented commodity economy mentioned above necessitate that we apply the relationships between goods and money not only in a manner consistent with the level of development, but that we also give attention to the nature of these relationships, that is, that we know how to apply them within a multi-segmented structure. We cannot achieve results in the application of these relationships if we give light attention to the level of development or the nature of these relationships.

2. Applying the relationships between goods and money in revamping the management mechanism on the basic level.

The management mechanism on the basic level has truly begun to move in the right direction since the issuance of Political Bureau Resolution 306 (draft). At the Third Plenum of the Sixth Party Central Committee, the matter of guaranteeing the production and business independence of basic state-operated units as "socialist commodity producers" was raised.

The views of our party are that we must shift the basic units of the economy to socialist commodity production, implement cost accounting and socialist business practices, dismantle the mechanism based on bureaucratic centralism and state subsidies and combat the undisciplined style of business of doing whatever suits convenience. These views create favorable conditions for applying the relationships between goods and money and demand that the application of these relationships be carried out in accordance with the new understanding of these relationships within the multi-segmented structure of the economy, in which the socialist economy plays the dominant role.

In the coming period, it is necessary to apply the relationships between goods and money in the following primary areas:

To begin with, we must apply them to establish the planned and organized nature of production operations at basic units and closely tie these operations to social needs and market conditions. These are normal requirements of every commodity production unit. Production and business independence only begins here. As long as the conditions needed for reproduction are lacking and production relations remain confused, it will be necessary to adopt certain legally binding and directed norms

aimed at creating favorable conditions for basic units to display independence. These are transitional steps. The process of gradually reducing the number of legally binding norms and using such methods as orders for goods from the state and other units, using contractors and using economic incentives will increase as basic units acquire greater independence in production.

The law of value must be applied in determining what production costs are by tapping the potential which lies in organizing production more efficiently, applying technological advances more rapidly and using advanced quotas and ceilings which make it possible to cut material and labor costs, possible to produce high quality products at low costs and possible for a given quantity of production capital to be used to produce a larger volume of goods.

These are the demands of the law of value in production. At the same time, this is the path for basic units to follow to earn an increasingly large income, fulfill an increasingly large obligation to the state, acquire the conditions needed to improve the living standards of the worker and be able to carry out capital formation in order to expand production.

Applying the law of value in production at basic units also demands that we have effective control over supplies, raw materials and energy. The supplies of enterprises come from two sources. The supplies provided by the state will no longer be allotted but must be provided on a business basis, with the state eventually not subsidizing anything at all. With supplies inadequate, supplies must be distributed in accordance with the priorities of the state plan and at business support prices. Losses should be subsidized in only a few and temporary cases. The supplies acquired by enterprises on their own must, of course, be acquired at market prices. The accounting relationship between the prices of the two sources of supplies in production costs is a matter that must be studied so that the enterprise earns a profit and in order to help improve product prices.

Determining the profits of the enterprise is an important matter in the application of the relationships between goods and money. The way that the profit margin was established previously is not compatible with commodity production. The laws of commodity production demand that profits be closely linked to the level of business of the basic unit. Legitimate profits must be the result of subtracting production costs and payments to the state from gross business revenues. As a result, lower production costs and reasonable payments to the state result in increased profits for the enterprise. It must be stressed that when profits lose their stimulative effect upon production, the application of this category is not successful.

The combined result of the application of the relationships between goods and money in the case of basic units is financial independence. In the case of commodity production units, the dismantling of state subsidies will

only be thorough when they can cover their own costs and finance their own operations. With this, the finances of the enterprise will be separated from the finances of the state and closely tied to bank credit. The state will create capital sources for basic units, stabilize the rate at which payments are made to the budget for a number of years, allow the enterprise to mobilize capital in a variety of ways and expand its authority to use the assets of the enterprise, which includes allowing the funds resulting from depreciation to remain at the enterprise, etc.

The enterprise must make good use of the conditions which create capital sources. At the same time, it must use its independence in planning, supplies, labor, wages and so forth to exert a strong impact upon and reduce production costs per unit of product to insure that these costs are lowered and that the volume of products produced is increased, thereby increasing the enterprise's profit in each production cycle.

Developing integration and joint businesses among economic units is an important aspect in the application of the relationships between goods and money in revamping the management mechanism on the basic level. Developing integration and joint businesses is the essential trend in the process of developing the division of social labor. It is a step in the process of advancing from small-scale to large-scale commodity production. It is a good way to make use of the multi-segmented reproduction structure and put an end to isolation and separation.

In applying the relationships between goods and money in activities related to integration and joint businesses, the following several matters must be taken into consideration:

- Credit and financial activities must stimulate integration and joint business within production between production and circulation units while avoiding those forms of integration and joint businesses designed to go into trade merely to profit by the difference in prices. Integration and joint businesses must comply with the principles on joint business and economic integration set forth in the resolution of the Third Plenum of the Sixth Party Central Committee.
- The principles of equality, democracy and mutual benefit must be observed. In the sharing of profits, attention must be given to the percentage of capital contributed by each party, management efficiency and the need to expand the joint business.
- Favorable conditions must be created in terms of credit, taxes, prices and exports-imports in order to strongly develop integration and joint business between the state-operated economy and the other segments of the economy. This is the principle way to utilize and transform the private and individual segments of the economy, draw the collective and household economies into the reproduction process and establish a division of labor by economic sector.

The last but most important matter in the application of the relationships between goods and money in revamping the management mechanism at basic economic units is that of defining the role and responsibility of those who apply these relationships. This is related to the organizational mechanism and the apparatus leading economic units. We must bring into play the position of the collective of workers as the masters at the basic unit and to do so in a way which democratizes the management process along with increasing the responsibility and effectiveness of the party committee, the director, the trade union and the Youth Union.

3. Applying the relationships between goods and money in revamping the state economic management mechanism.

Revamping the management mechanism at basic economic units is the starting point of the entire process of revamping the national economic mechanism. Having begun the revamping of the management mechanism at basic units by implementing Political Bureau Resolution 306 (draft), the advances made in the management process have become increasingly dependent upon revamping the state's economic management. At present, delays in revamping the state's economic management are causing serious mistakes in many areas within the management mechanism on the basic level. Thus, is there a need to apply the relationships between goods and money in revamping the state's economic management?

Facts have shown that there can be no correct revamping on the state level without correctly applying the relationships between goods and money.

The real difficulties in revamping the state's economic management mechanism, and, consequently, the difficulties in applying the relationships between goods and money in our country, are: we must correctly establish the reciprocal relationship between the state plan and the market, between the socialist economy and the private and individual segments of the economy, among the different levels of commodity production in the various regions of the country and between the overseas economy and the domestic economy.

It is impossible to deal with each of these matters separately. Rather, these relationships must be viewed against the requirements of a planned commodity economy and dealt with by means of appropriate and well coordinated steps.

Examined from the practical perspective, the following several matters are involved in the application of the relationships between goods and money in revamping the state's economic management mechanism:

Of foremost importance today is the need to clearly distinguish between the business management function of economic units and the state's economic management

function. Only by clearly distinguishing between these two functions is it possible for the application of the relationships between goods and money to be properly oriented toward socialism. To distinguish between these two functions, it is necessary to study and conduct an overall review of the management provided by the state and the revamping of planning by the state.

The realities of management in our country demand that the state treat "commerce as the special link" in the management chain. Resolving the commerce problem in our country is not only necessary to encourage units to shift to the new mechanism, it is a political-economic requirement as well. Against the background of the conditions existing in Soviet Russia in the early 1920's, V.I. Lenin pointed out: "Where is this base? It lies in commodity trade with peasants."¹ The special significance of resolving the commerce problem in our country is that we must organize correct commodity trade between agriculture and industry, between the cities and the countryside to begin to create an economic base consistent with the need to strengthen the state. Many model units in commerce (such as the Ho Chi Minh City Grain Corporation, the Seaprodex Marine Products Export-Import Corporation and so forth) have provided good experience in how to resolve the problems of prices, contracts, profits, material supply, etc. We must review these experiences in order to restructure the field of commerce. Without this restructuring, no political or economic requirement of the new management mechanism can be met.

Formulating a national financial policy based on the view that ours is a planned commodity economy is the premise to every reform. V.I. Lenin pointed out: "Regardless of what happens, we must successfully carry out sound financial reforms but we should remember that if our financial policy does not succeed, each of our thorough reforms will also fail."² V.I. Lenin demanded the adoption of financial centralism for the sake of the interests of the worker. V.I. Lenin said: "I consider centralism to be a certain minimum guarantee for the laboring masses."³ Financial centralism is not contradictory to the independence and initiative of the localities because it is based on socialist financial principles—the basis of the application of the relationships between goods and money in this field.

- The principle of separating enterprise finances from state finances. This insures financial independence for the enterprise and provides the state with sources of budget revenues through socialist business activities.
- The principle of a balanced budget based on the positive reciprocal impact among finances, banking and commerce. Financial and banking activities must support socialist commerce so that it can fulfill its task as the "link" and bring about expanded reproduction on the scope of the entire national economy.
- The principle of bank control over enterprise finances.

On this basis, measures must be taken to cut costs (such as reducing the size of staffs, cutting administrative costs, bringing the enterprise within the mechanism of financial independence...) and increase revenues (such as the enterprise turning over additional profits to the state, restructuring the tax system and the tax collection apparatus, issuing bonds and coupons, etc.).

We must expand the role of the bank on the basis of the results achieved through measures taken to stabilize the dong. In particular, banking activities must be closely tied to commerce activities, must encourage basic units to shift to economic accounting and socialist business practices. Within the context of the proletarian dictatorship and socialist ownership, Lenin demanded that the State Bank work 100 times more closely with commerce compared to capitalist banks. In addition, the bank serves the role of auditing the finances of the enterprise and has the tasks of promoting integration and joint business between the socialist segment of the economy and the other segments and stimulating the use and transformation of these other segments of the economy in the process of operating joint businesses and practicing integration.

Footnotes

1. V.I. Lenin: "Collected Works," Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1987, Volume 43, p 462.
2. Ibid., Volume 36, p 434.
3. Ibid.

Improving Quality Control

42100009g Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 4, Apr 88 pp 32-36

[Article by Hoang Manh Tuan, deputy director of the Standards-Weights and Measures-Quality Control General Department]

[Text] One serious problem which has persisted for many years within our country's economy is that the quality of products is constantly changing and continues to decline, thus causing major harm to the economy and to the consumer. Even the quality of some of our exports has not been stable, as a result of which we have been unable to retain the confidence of foreign customers.

This is the problem of products and goods not meeting the specifications of their original models, not being the same in terms of parameters, dimensions or fit. The reliability and lifespan of products are low. The nutritional value and cleanliness of food products as well as the aesthetics and convenience of consumer goods are very poor. Many products are unsafe and easily cause accidents or pose a danger to the consumer.

Besides the poor quality of products and goods, more and more fake goods have been emerging. These goods make their way into state stores from the free market.

The decline in product quality over the years has caused a large waste of labor, materials and natural resources of the country and foreign aid, thus causing financial losses to the state and the people and steadily exacerbating the already serious imbalance between supply and demand. This is extremely serious waste, the enormously harmful consequences of which we have long failed to see.

Why has product quality been unstable and steadily declining in this way for many years? There are both objective causes (such as underdeveloped and backward material-technical bases, the severe consequences of the war and so forth) and subjective causes. The most important, however, are the subjective causes. To begin with, producers, businessmen and economic managers have yet to recognize the problem and have not correctly fulfilled their responsibilities. For a rather long time, many management cadres gave virtually no attention to product quality in production and business. They maintained that at a time when the economy was still experiencing many difficulties and was unbalanced, the need was to provide the consumer with an ample supply of goods. Quality could be compromised, even ignored. Other persons have asserted that in the confusing economic situation of today, the poor and unstable product quality we have seen in the recent past is natural and cannot be improved. This thinking led to a relaxation of efforts to guide technical management and quality control work, to irresponsibility in production and business, thus opening the way for the spread of careless, sloppy work.

Formalism, the pursuit of achievements, the lack of concern for efficiency and quality and rushing to produce a new product or finish a new project in order to commemorate some major holiday have frequently caused adverse and prolonged consequences, which cannot be corrected until much later. The thinking and habits of giving light attention to quality, placing sole emphasis upon quantity, violating technical discipline, ignoring minimum technical requirements in the manufacturing, packaging, transportation and storage of products...have caused chaos in production and violated the legitimate interests of the consumer.

The imbalance between supply and demand is the objective basis for the growing tendency to place sole emphasis upon output. When there is a shortage of goods, the consumer readily accepts (actually, is forced to accept) products of poor quality. If, in this situation, there is no correct appreciation of this problem or any determination to provide the necessary guidance, the conditions develop for negative phenomena to emerge. The result is that society must not only bear the material consequences of poor quality goods and fake goods, but must also bear the spiritual consequences of the steady spread

of doing things in a convenient and deceptive manner within collectives of workers, which adversely affects efforts to mold the new man and the socialist style of labor.

The poor and unstable quality of products stems from the management mechanism based on bureaucratic administration and state subsidies, particularly in the economic field. This mechanism has not only impeded, but also nullified the positive impact of the factor of quality in production and business, thereby causing the production and business process to easily fall into a negative sphere: disregard for quality and final results. In actuality, the plan has virtually ignored the factor of product quality completely for many years. Report data, statistics and the method of evaluating production and business results have heavily stressed quantity while not giving serious consideration to quality. This has been one of the major weaknesses in economic management in recent years. Prices have not provided incentive for basic production units to apply technical advances and improve the quality of their products. The practice of setting many different prices for many different levels of quality or the difference in price not corresponding to the difference in quality have not encouraged persons to do good work and have sometimes led to persons who produce fake goods earning much more in income than persons who produce good products. This has been accompanied by the intentional production of poor quality products in order to earn a higher profit. To date, we still do not have a correct mechanism of product quality awards and penalties, with the exception of the price support mechanism for products which receive the state seal of quality from the State Scientific and Technical Commission, the State Pricing Commission and the Ministry of Finance. Enterprises which produce products of high quality and high use value are not appropriately encouraged. Enterprises which produce products of poor quality and low use value are not penalized and sometimes even receive praise or a bonus for exceeding their output plan.

The shortcomings and weaknesses in the organization and management of the production and business process are also an important cause of the poor and unstable product quality that has existed for many years. Quality control, which should be an important element of economic management and the management of production and business, has been neglected for many years. There are even some management cadres who consider this to be the work of other persons, work not related to them. This laxity is evident in everything from the poor quality of work in planning and the zoning of raw material zones, the reorganization of production by economic-technical sector, the division of labor and responsibilities between the central and local levels and the expansion of the management role of the ministries to the failure to provide the minimum foundations and prerequisites needed to carry out normal production and business processes with the aims of stabilizing and improving the quality of products and goods. Many basic units fail

to maintain their product quality usually because they are not provided with a full or timely supply of the electricity, coal, raw materials, supplies, spare parts and tools needed for production. New products have been put into mass production without undergoing trial production and without their quality being certified. The formulation and application of industrial standards and regulations have been given light attention. There is a very serious shortage of measuring and testing equipment. The supply does not meet the needs to evaluate and maintain product quality. Many production lines are outmoded. Equipment is in poor condition and cannot guarantee the quality of the production process. The maintenance and repair of equipment as well as the elementary and advanced skill training of cadres and workers are not being given appropriate attention. Not enough importance is attached to quality control within basic production units. In circulation and distribution, the lax management of goods causes the quality of goods to decline even further in transportation, storage, handling and so forth. Laxity in economic contract signing procedures and the failure to give attention to product quality standards when testing and accepting goods have created loopholes that have been used by irresponsible persons and persons earning their livings illegally to throw goods of poor quality and fake goods onto the market, thus creating additional disorder for the economy.

What must be emphasized in organization-management is that the organization, division of labor and the division of responsibilities for managing product quality among the different sectors and levels are not clearly defined.

In revamping economic management in our country in keeping with the spirit of the resolution of the Sixth Party Congress and the resolution of the Third Party Plenum, it is first of all necessary to adopt new perceptions, a new sense of responsibility and a new sense of strategic determination with a view toward achieving true efficiency and quality.

The goal of achieving quality has been mentioned many times at conferences, in documents and in the press but the specific requirements regarding the essence and degree of quality that need be achieved have rarely been defined. We must immediately put an end to the practice of making general and vague appeals for higher quality. Instead, we must quantify the degree of effort that must be made to achieve quality in a specific and clear manner for each stage of development of the economy. It is also necessary to immediately put an end to the practice of placing sole emphasis upon quantity in economic management. Instead, we must carry out production and business activities with balanced development between quantity and quality, with quality being the basis for determining and developing the quantity produced. This new outlook must eventually lead to a new approach: making quality control an important and constant part of the production and business process. To bring the

development of the economy truly in line with socialist business accounting, with the principle of democratic centralism, we cannot continue to maintain a method of managing the economy which does not include managing the quality of products and goods. The new mechanism must correct this shortcoming. We must establish an appropriate quality control system and make this system an important part of the new management system of the national economy.

In view of the fact that we still face many difficulties, can we perform the task of maintaining product quality? The 8 years that we have spent certifying the quality of products allow us to answer in the affirmative.

The realities of awarding the state seal of quality to more than 400 products of nearly 170 enterprises under six ministries, three general departments and 18 provinces and municipalities show: under equally difficult objective conditions, those places which exert a high degree of effort, know how to manage quality and closely tie the accountability and interests of the producer to the quality of the products produced can produce products which not only meet but also exceed quality standards and quantitative quotas. Hanoi Tool Factory No 1, the Hanoi Ball Bearing Enterprise, the Thong Nhat Electric Motor Enterprise in Hanoi, the Refrigerated Shrimp Processing Enterprises in Phu Khanh, Quy Nhon, Quang Nai, Da Nang, Haiphong and Quang Ninh...have been working hard to produce products of high quality for many years. Many cooperatives have also been working to maintain and improve the quality of their products to meet state standards. The Doan Ket Machine Cooperative in Thai Binh received the grade I seal of quality for its bicycle handlebars on 7 November 1984. Following 2 years of extensive efforts to develop and apply many organizational-technical measures, the bicycle handlebars produced by this cooperative now bear the state seal of high grade quality. The bicycle rims of the Tien Tien Machine Cooperative in Ha Nam Ninh also now bear the high grade seal of quality after bearing the grade I seal for 2 years.

These are examples worthy of study, examples which reflect enormous efforts made by leaders and collectives of genuine workers, efforts made in the interests of the state, the consumer and themselves. Clearly, our potentials are many; however, we have yet to fully develop and utilize them.

To correct the continuing decline in product quality, it is of pressing importance in the next 3 years that we stop this decline, limit and eventually cease the production and circulation of fake goods and goods of poor quality so that the majority of the social product meets minimum qualitative requirements. This goal is not high. However, it will not be easy to meet if we do not adopt an appropriate mechanism and urgent measures.

Efforts must be focused on establishing the conditions needed to maintain and improve the quality of a number of essential goods included in the three major economic programs. These products, especially export goods, must meet the requirements of Vietnam standards and sector standards.

By achieving this goal in the next 3 years (1988-1990), we will lay a solid foundation for expanding and raising the product quality target in the final years of the 20th century: bringing the majority of the social product solidly up to the requirements of Vietnam standards and sector standard while forming groups of primary export products produced in large quantities which meet the qualitative requirements of Vietnam standards, CEMA standards (STSEV) and international standards (ISO). This will help us to secure a position on the world market, expand our exports at the start of the 21st century and win increasing confidence on the part of customers overseas.

Achieving this goal will cause our country's economy to develop in a steady and highly efficient manner. This is difficult and complex work but it is also work that we are entirely capable of performing if we bring about a strong change from the top to the bottom in our perceptions as well as our actions regarding this very important target. Of course, to do this, we must have a national policy on quality and make every effort to implement a host of major measures to correct the shortcomings mentioned above. Product quality must become an object that can be managed and controlled.

Research-Exchange of Opinions on Inflation

Preliminary Review of Opinions on Inflation

42100009h Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese No 4, Apr 88 pp 37-44, 52

[Editorial Board preliminary review of "Opinions on Inflation" in TAP CHI CONG SAN No 10, 1987-No 3, 1988]

[Text] During the past several years, inflation in our country has been studied by many persons and various plans for combating it have been proposed. The articles carried in the Research-Exchange of Opinions section of TAP CHI CONG SAN in issues No 10 and No 12, 1987, and Nos 1, 2 and 3, 1988, focused on discussing the state and causes of inflation and inflation-fighting measures in our country. In terms of both theory and practice, this is a large and complex problem, one closely related to the economy, politics and social life of the country. In the exchange of opinions concerning these matters, we have seen that the problem is still being viewed and raised in different ways. However, there are some fundamental aspects of the problem that can be cited for the information of readers.

In the past, many persons held that inflation was an inherent malady of the capitalist countries. It most often occurred after a major socio-economic crisis. Today, many economists maintain that inflation has become a universal economic phenomenon of the capitalist and even the developing countries and that inflation arrived in the socialist countries "unconsciously."

In our country, inflation has existed for many years, since the years of the wars of resistance against France and the United States. It has progressed from "hidden inflation" to "overt inflation," from an inflationary deficit in the reproduction process to imbalance in every aspect of the social reproduction process.

In assessing inflation in our country, some authors maintain that it is rampant, hyper-inflation. Other authors maintain that inflation is serious.... Although their assessments differ as to the degree of inflation, all these authors agree that inflation is having an increasingly adverse impact upon the entire economy and social life. In the field of distribution-circulation, prices have been rising rapidly and the purchasing power of the dong has seriously declined. The state does not control goods and money. Production and business units are experiencing a serious shortage of capital and cash. There is a continuing budget deficit and cash deficit. More seriously, inflation has become a tool for the spontaneous redistribution of national income among the various strata of the population to the advantage of persons who earn their livings illegitimately, speculators, persons who profit by the difference in prices...and to the disadvantage of cadres, manual workers, civil servants, the armed forces and other persons who earn their livings honestly. The management apparatus of the state is ineffective. Discipline, order and the law are not being strictly observed. Inventory, control and auditing through money have been lax and neglected. These are important factors that have caused inflation to become more serious.

In summary, inflation in our country is not simply a monetary phenomenon, it is also a true socio-economic phenomenon. Prices have been soaring. Real wages have seriously declined. The people are encountering many difficulties in their everyday lives. Negative phenomena and injustice in society have been steadily increasing. The confidence of the masses in the leadership of the party has been steadily declining. Discipline is lax. Economic and social order have been disrupted.

The inflation in our country stems from many subjective and objective, many direct and indirect causes. Taking different perspectives, many authors delved into a comprehensive analysis of the causes of inflation and proposed a host of coordinated measures for eliminating inflation. Others only addressed the causes of credit-generated inflation or anti-inflationary price control measures. On the basis of the articles carried in this section, we have summarized the main causes of inflation as follows:

1. The economy is weak. Production has been developing slowly and serious imbalances have existed in many areas for many years. The products produced do not meet the requirements of producers or consumers. The supply of goods controlled by the state is very thin. Many mistakes have been made in structuring the economy and investments. Economic development plans have not taken financial or material capabilities into consideration. Much liquid capital is in the hands of commerce organizations. Investments have been decentralized, fragmented and ineffective. Many construction projects remain unfinished or cannot be used once they have been completed. Only about 40 to 50 percent of equipment capacity is being utilized by basic production units. At many factories, because their equipment is very old and outmoded, the consumption of raw materials and supplies is very high and wasteful and the products produced are of poor quality. Many economic potentials have not been tapped. The strengths of the various segments of the economy have not been mobilized to develop production forces.

While production has been underdeveloped, the stockpiles of enterprises (which include raw materials, finished materials, semi-finished products and unmarketed products) have been excessively high. The sources of goods controlled by the state (especially by the state-operated commerce system) declined rapidly from 50 percent in 1980 to only 25-27 percent of total retail sales in the years from 1985 to 1987. Many commerce units have not been actively selling goods in order to generate revenues (instead, they have been holding onto goods and waiting for an opportunity to profit by the difference in prices), thereby causing the sources of budget and cash revenues to decline.

The production situation and the weaknesses described above are the basic, underlying causes of the serious inflation being experienced today.

2. The direct causes of inflation are the state budget deficit and shortcomings in credit activities. The underlying cause of the budget deficit has been the decline of the economy, most importantly the decline in revenues from the state-operated economy (from 70 percent of the plan during the years between 1981 and 1985 to 50 percent of the plan during the period between 1986 and 1987). Sources of revenue in the collective and private segments of the economy have not been given appropriate attention and do not coincide with the positions of these segments within the national economy (they produce nearly 70 percent of national income but only contribute to the state budget about 22 percent of total domestic income). At the same time as we have been experiencing a large shortfall in revenues, expenditures have far exceeded the capabilities of the economy and have been increasing, such as expenditures on capital construction, wage payments to the administrative apparatus, compensation for losses, price subsidies... In the recent past, the budget deficit, instead of decreasing, has increased significantly. To begin with, mandated cuts, in

actuality, have not been effective (the central level terminated a few capital construction projects but capital construction by the sectors and localities has increased tremendously). Due to the lack of thorough study and analysis, we have not arrived at a well coordinated solution based on the vigorous development of a planned commodity production system—a real system of commodity production, not an artificial one with real losses and artificial profits. As a result, “spending cuts have led to deficit spending.” In addition, the current division of budget responsibilities is violating the principle of democratic centralism and has caused the national financial system to be decentralized and weak. The central state only controls a small percentage of foreign currency revenues. The major portion is controlled by localities and basic units. In many localities, there is a budget surplus and funds are used wastefully. Meanwhile, the central budget is operating at a large deficit and requires the use of newly issued money. Moreover, the policy on combating state subsidies through the state budget has, in practice, been replaced by subsidies through many different forms of credit: loans to enterprises make up a large percentage of the self-acquired capital under liquid capital ceilings; allotments have taken the place of the state budget to compensate for shortages of liquid capital; provinces and municipalities have taken out loans to balance local budgets (with loan proceeds being used in capital construction or to make payments outside the budget); loans have been made to subsidize prices, compensate for losses incurred from export goods... Credit debt (both short-term and long-term) has been rising rapidly, far exceeding the sources of capital that can be mobilized within the economy. The interest rate system is not playing the role as a lever centralizing each source of domestic capital in the bank. Cash is not returning to bank funds, thus forcing the state to increase the rate at which money is issued for budget expenditures. The structure of credit investments is not reasonable. Capital in the form of credit has not been concentrated in the material production sectors which support the three major economic programs. Rather, far too much capital has been concentrated in the commerce sector, where the returns from its use are low and not commensurate with the amount of capital invested. This situation, which has persisted for many years, has caused the economy to be in complete disorder and caused inflation through the budget deficit to become more serious.

3. Another cause is that the management mechanism has not been revamped. The management mechanism based on bureaucratic centralism and state subsidies has still not been dismantled. Bitter opposition from supporters of the old mechanism has paralyzed economic policies and measures of a unified nature and created opportunities for the spread of decentralization and localism. The payment of wages and bonuses within enterprises frequently seriously violate the law of distribution in accordance with labor. Wages do not reflect labor productivity and are very much higher in the South than they are in the North at the same types of enterprises and

within the same sectors and trades. Although the economy is in disorder, the central state has been ineffective in managing the economy, particularly the field of distribution-circulation: prices, wages and money.

In the two comprehensive price adjustments (1981 and 1985), the prices of materials and goods rose very many times. With each adjustment, the overall situation of the economy worsened and the relationships between prices and wages, between prices and finances deteriorated further. The supply of goods in the possession of the state is very thin, not large enough to control the social market. On the other hand, the new price scale is not based on the realities of production and the circulation of goods. This situation has rendered every attempt to maintain the new price scale ineffective. One serious problem is that the ratio between the retail prices of industrial consumer goods of the state and agricultural product procurement prices is very unreasonable. Agricultural product procurement prices are continuing to rise and the budget must continue to subsidize these prices in order to meet the needs for grain supplied under ration standards and the various types of exported agricultural products. Meanwhile, the prices of state-operated industrial goods are rising at a slower rate. It is, of course, an exceedingly difficult and complex matter to adjust this ratio to a reasonable level when our country's social market still consists of two market components: the organized market and the free market.

Efforts to solve the price problem are closely related to wages. Our mistake was that we separated prices and wages and fell into a “price-wage spiral,” with wages pushing up prices, prices pushing up wages, wages pushing up prices again...with no end in sight. During the past several years, prices have been rising at a rate many times higher than nominal wages, thus causing real wages to seriously decline to the point where workers do not earn enough to maintain a minimum standard of living.

Since 1981, we have devalued the dong on our own initiative twice. This plus the mistakes made in the 1985 money exchange program have caused the dong to rapidly decline in value. The steady decline in confidence in the dong and the rising fear of inflation have inevitably led to very serious socio-economic consequences. With this, price uniformity and discipline have also been shattered. Every level, unit and sector has been drawn into the mechanism of automatically raising prices in order to profit by the price differential. Each normal relationship between the state and farmers and the other segments of the economy has been shattered.

The above mentioned price, wage and financial situation is one of the direct causes of inflation. Inflation has placed the economic-financial system in an increasingly difficult situation. The rapidly rising rate of inflation is reducing the effectiveness of and even nullifying the economic-financial management policies and measures of the state. It has come time for our party and state to

take urgent measures to fight inflation. After these measures have been in effect for a while, the experience gained from them must be summarized. On this basis, a complete plan for fighting inflation for a period of several years must be adopted. All levels and sectors must display a high spirit of responsibility to the fatherland and nation by actively participating in the fight against inflation.

Inflation in our country has many causes. Above, we have only presented the primary causes for the information of our readers.

As regards inflation fighting measures in our country, in the articles published in TAP CHI CONG SAN, the authors presented many different measures, some of which are basic and long range and others of which are immediate, emergency measures. Below, we have summarized a few of the main measures:

1. Of basic and long-range importance is the need to focus efforts on stepping up production on the basis of restructuring the production sectors and reorganizing the structure of investments.

To stimulate the development of the economy and produce many types of products and goods for society, a host of policies must be applied with the aims of thoroughly tapping production capacity, developing each potential and encouraging the various strata of the population and the different segments of the economy to invest in the development of production and implement the three programs in grain-food products, consumer goods and export goods. On the basis of developing the strengths of the domestic economy, we must boldly expand our economic relations with foreign countries and use the modern technological advantages of the world commodity economy to correct the underdeveloped state of our country's economy.

Of foremost importance today is the need to take determined steps to restructure the economy in a rational manner while adjusting the structure of investments in order to develop each existing potential to the maximum degree possible.

With the Sixth Party Congress having adopted the three major economic programs in grain-food products, consumer goods and export goods, should not the structure of the economy during the initial stage in our country be: agriculture-light industry and exports-imports (with a number of necessary heavy industrial sectors being developed to a certain degree)?

Although we have adjusted the structure of the economy in the direction described above, we have yet to see clear changes. Investments of capital, materials, technology and labor continue to be structured in virtually the same old way. The sectors and localities continue to expand capital construction at will. The decentralization and waste of capital and technical materials are serious. The

state needs to take decisive, timely and bold measures to terminate projects deemed unnecessary, limit the allotment of capital or not allot capital to enterprises which are inefficiently operated and giving priority in receiving capital and materials to enterprises which are efficiently operated. Enterprises which have been operating at a loss for many years must be quickly shifted to another business or disbanded in order to reduce the heavy burden upon the national financial system.

Expanding production and establishing new production units with the aim of providing jobs for millions of persons (unemployed workers and new workers) and increasing the supply of products and goods for society demand, above everything else, that we have capital. With inflation as serious as it is today, the state must adopt an appropriate policy for mobilizing capital, one which gives the various strata of the population and different segments of the economy (Vietnamese living at home as well as compatriots overseas) a feeling of assurance, gives them the confidence to invest in production with the guarantee that they will retain ownership of the capital they invest and enjoy the legitimate returns from their labor and capital.

2. Of urgent and pressing importance is the need to take positive financial measures aimed at thoroughly developing revenues sources within the economy, sensibly reducing expenditures and guaranteeing that the budget is gradually balanced. A resolute attitude must be adopted toward the sectors and localities with regard to observing financial discipline.

The percentage of domestically produced national income mobilized for the state budget must be further increased.

We must gradually improve the system of obligatory payments for inclusion in the budget and the enterprise profits distribution policy. In the immediate future, it is necessary to impose a tax on capital (on production and business capital) for all economic units. The profit distribution and enterprise funds policy must meet the requirements of guaranteeing stable sources of revenues for the state budget from the real profits of economic units; expand financial independence to enterprises; encourage units to use capital in a frugal manner that yields high economic returns; and encourage units to make efficient use of equipment and machine capacity.

Revenue sources within state-operated, collective and private economic units must be thoroughly tapped. In the immediate future, we must revise and improve the industrial-commercial tax policy. It is also necessary to study ways to regulate businesses whose incomes are large. Tax rates must be promptly adjusted to be consistent with price changes on the market and combat the undercollection of taxes in every form.

As regards agricultural taxes, we must insure that taxes are collected in exact accordance with regulations and that uncollected tax debts are repaid while awaiting the revision and amendment of the agricultural tax policy. If the tax rate were not 6-7 percent as it is now, but 10 percent, we could not only meet minimum needs, but could also establish a national grain reserve and, on this basis, control prices. In addition to the grain tax, we must also enact a tax on the other crops and species of livestock in order to increase budget revenue sources.

In particular, it is very necessary that we successfully implement a tax on export and import goods.

The state must also promulgate a number of other new tax policies, such as an income tax for all strata of the population; a tax on the mining and use of natural resources; a registration tax; an inventory tax on state-operated commerce organizations, marketing organizations and private businesses...

In addition to measures to increase domestic revenue sources, positive measures must also be taken to increase the sources of revenue overseas through economic trade and overseas services. The state must implement a dynamic and attractive exchange rates policy in order to attract foreign currency.

In conjunction with measures to increase revenue sources, measures must also be taken to reduce budget expenditures (sensibly eliminate or reduce expenditure items). To begin with, we must immediately cut unnecessary capital construction expenditures. In the field of production, capital construction investments should only be made in projects which support the production of grain, food products, consumer goods and export goods. We must resolutely reduce the size of administrative staffs and make the administrative apparatus streamlined and highly efficient. At the same time, labor cooperation with foreign countries must be expanded in order to generate increased revenues and reduce the difficulties facing the economy. A strict policy of frugality must be implemented in the consumption of energy, fuels, raw materials and in personal consumption and to combat waste and misappropriation within state agencies and among the population with the aims of bringing into the bank the money resulting from the reduction of production costs and increasing budget revenue sources.

The main guidelines for achieving a balanced budget are to increase revenue sources and reduce expenditures in a reasonable manner. Although inflation in our country is serious, our state continues to experience a very serious shortage of cash due to the rapid devaluation of the dong and mistakes on our part. Over the long range, we must make fundamental improvements to the monetary system so that our country's currency is closely linked to international currencies, that is, is convertible at home and abroad. In the immediate future, additional money can be issued at the rate required to meet the needs of production and procurements to control goods. It is also

necessary to study the possibility of issuing a dong based on the gold standard. Bank credit activities must be restored to their proper position: granting loans on the basis of capital that can be mobilized; making loans to entities which directly support production; encouraging savings deposits and making loans in accordance with the interest rates schedule set by the state; closely combining loans and the payment of loans; payment relations must be implemented through the transfer of funds at the bank; the use of credit capital supplied by the bank to meet budget expenditure needs must be stopped at an early date; and loans made from capital in the form of newly issued money must be limited to the maximum degree possible.

3. Another no less urgent matter is the need to revamp the economic management mechanism and reorganize distribution-circulation.

To begin with, it is necessary to quickly shift production organizations to economic accounting and socialist business practices; implement the principles of self-funding and recovering capital on one's own; make economic efficiency and profits the standards for evaluating the results of production and business; not allow enterprises to formulate loss plans; and not use capital of the budget to compensate for losses.

Establishing a new management mechanism in keeping with the spirit of the resolution of the Third Plenum of the Sixth Party Committee means: on the one hand, we must allow basic economic units to display greater initiative and creativity on the basis of the principle of democratic socialism and on the basis of making economic accounting and socialist business practices the essence of management; on the other hand, each basic unit must create its own sources of capital, use these sources in a rational manner, produce many products and goods for society, balance the three interests and maintain a rational relationship between capital formation and consumption with the aim of stimulating expanded reproduction.

Inflation fighting measures must be taken not only within the field of production, but also within the field of distribution-circulation.

To begin with, let us discuss prices, as mentioned above, one major characteristic of inflation in our country is that it is occurring within a social market that still consists of two components: the organized market and the free market. These two components support, stimulate, control and oppose each other. The very large difference in prices between these two market components draws goods from the organized market to the free market and creates the tendency to do business by profiting by the difference in prices. To correct this situation, it is necessary to gradually eliminate the difference in prices between these two market components. The basic factor in stabilizing prices and establishing balance between the two markets is that state-operated

commerce must bring more goods under its control in order to acquire the strength needed to control the market. In necessary cases, the state must spend a large amount of money to buy such essential goods as grain and consumer goods from the collective and individual economies and then adjust the prices of these goods in order to recover the money spent. The state must wage a determined struggle against profiteering and hoarding, against the production and sale of fake goods. There are many reasons why goods and money are flowing in one direction, from state warehouses to the free market, one of which is the difference in prices. We must look for every way to eliminate the conditions that make it possible to profit by the difference in prices, establish a new and reasonable price scale and eventually implement a one price mechanism. For the immediate future, two prices are acceptable for a small number of basic materials and essential consumer goods. This, however, must be considered a temporary measure taken reluctantly.

In every society, wage earners are the persons who directly bear the consequences of inflation, of rapidly rising prices at a time when nominal wages are not increasing at the same rate, which leads to a serious decline in real wages. Our country's current wage system is unreasonable in many respects. Every locality, sector and unit has its own wage and bonus policy. The very wide differences among these policies have resulted in workers who have the same occupational skills and who make equal contributions receiving very different wages, thus seriously violating the principle of social fairness. The urgent problem facing us now is the need to correctly determine the wages of cadres, manual workers, civil servants and the armed forces with the aims of providing them with a minimum standard of living and correcting the serious inequities in the current wage system. A unified, nationwide wage policy must be enacted, the sooner, the better (one based on financial capabilities, not on who can get what for themselves).

The state must soon refine and establish uniformity among the policies which provide material incentives to collectives of workers to raise their labor productivity and maintain labor discipline. It must adopt correct methods for managing the wage fund, methods based on socialist business practices. It must adjust the prices of industrial goods and bring them into a reasonable relationship with agricultural product procurement prices. It must take determined steps to stop production units from competing against one another for higher wages and prices by improper methods, sometimes even by eating into the fixed assets of the enterprise, thereby causing disorder within the economy.

The commerce sector, which consists of the home trade and foreign trade sectors, plays an especially important role in correcting the disorder within distribution and circulation.

In recent years, the state has invested a rather large amount of capital in this field but the returns have been very low. State-operated commerce has not only failed to

fulfill its task of controlling goods, controlling money and controlling the market, but, in many cases, has also aided dishonest merchants siphoning goods from state warehouses onto the free market or held onto goods to profit by the difference in prices, thus causing considerable losses to the economy.

To correct this situation, we must, together with taking measures to concentrate the supply of goods within state-operated commerce, tightly manage and effectively use in business the supply of goods currently in the hands of the state. Economic and administrative measures (including the various forms of requisitioning) must be combined to conduct inspections and deal with unlawful warehouse inventories of production units. A heavy inventory tax must be imposed upon commerce organizations which hold onto goods while awaiting higher prices. And, units which raise prices on their own before being ordered to do so by the state must be heavily fined.

We must reorganize the management of foreign trade, the management of exports-imports and the management of foreign currency. Greater returns must be achieved from the use of foreign currency to support the development needs of the economy nationwide. The disorder in the management of foreign trade stems from the failure to establish a clear division between the functions, authority and scope of business of the Ministry of Foreign Trade (now the Ministry of Overseas Economy) and the various sectors and localities, which has led to a situation which undermines the principle of the monopolization of foreign trade by the state. In the immediate future, we must dismantle a number of foreign trade business organizations (which are deemed unnecessary) of the sectors and localities in order to quickly put an end to competition in procurements and sales on the domestic and international markets. We must reexamine the mechanism which allows the sectors and localities to meet foreign currency needs on their own. We must stop the practice of domestic economic units making payment to one another in foreign currency. All payments in and conversions of foreign currency must be made through the Vietnam Foreign Trade Bank.

With inflation as serious as it is today, the state must take drastic measures to control all foreign trade rights, tightly manage foreign currency, gold and silver and centralize each source of the principal foreign currencies. At the same time, it must actively attract foreign currency from other sources, such as loans, aid, overseas Vietnamese and so forth to use in a planned way to meet pressing and essential needs of the entire national economy. It is truly absurd for a central government to control such a very low percentage of foreign currency as ours does today.

Once correct policies have been adopted, the factor of decisive significance in the struggle against inflation is to restore and build stronger economic discipline and order. If this is not done, our inflation fighting plan will remain on paper and be of no use in life at all.

To successfully combat inflation, we must overcome the serious difficulties currently being experienced with grain. In the immediate future, we must put a stop to the "rice panic" now taking place in some municipalities and industrial zones. Many different and well coordinated measures must be employed to mobilize all the people to participate in the struggle against inflation and to wage this struggle in an urgent and steadfast manner without being impetuous but also without being half-hearted as we proceed down the path of vigorously shifting each economic activity to socialist business accounting. At this time, each measure adopted to combat inflation must be aimed at stimulating the strong development of planned commodity production.

Research-Exchange of Opinions on State Management of the Economy

Increasing the Effectiveness of the State Management Apparatus

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[Article by Vu Cao Dam, director of the Management Science Institute, the State Economic Planning Commission]

[Text] 1. The Basic Flaws of the Management Apparatus

At present, there are 52 agencies in our country directly subordinate to the Council of Ministers, which are called by different names, such as commissions, ministries, general departments, line departments and subordinate institutes. Based on their functions, they can be divided into the following several basic types:

- State management agencies, such as the Planning Commission, the Science and Technology Commission, the Ministry of Finance and the Cropland Management General Department;
- Production-business organizations (or semi production-business), such as the Ministry of Marine Products and the Chemicals General Department;
- Scientific research, investigative and professional organizations, such as the Social Sciences Commission, the Meteorology and Hydrology General Department, the Survey-Maps Department and the institutes subordinate to the Council of Ministers, such as the Vietnam Institutes of Science, the National Atomic Energy Institute and the National Technology Institute.

Here, several questions come to mind: why are organizations that have the same function called by different names? For example, although they are all management agencies, some are called commissions while others are called ministries or general departments. Although they all share the same name, some general departments are management agencies while others organize production

and business, organize research and investigations or perform professional work. Were giving different names to organizations which have the same function or giving the same name to organizations with have different functions intentional and scientifically based or were they accidental phenomena that occurred in the process of the spontaneous formation of organizations?

Answering these questions clearly will surely provide the argumentation for reorganizing and increasing the effectiveness of the apparatus.

When we first began to build the country, we established a number of ministries. Later, these were divided to establish new ministries. For example, at first, we established the Ministry of Industry-Commerce. Later, this was divided into the Ministry of Industry and the Ministry of Commerce. Then, the Ministry of Industry was divided into the Ministry of Heavy Industry and the Ministry of Light Industry. Further divisions followed. The purpose of dividing the ministries was understood as supporting specialization by sector. And, the ministries of this type were understood as being ministries which provided production-business management by economic-technical sector. Deserving of attention here is that, on the momentum of development of the social division of labor and increasing specialization, the subdividing of the sectors and trades is an endless process. However, there are limits to the process of dividing the ministries into smaller ministries. This is the first difficulty we encounter when considering guidelines for the development of the ministries.

At the same time that certain ministries were being divided, others were being merged. For example, the Ministry of Power merged with the Ministry of Mines and Coal and the Ministry of Agriculture merged with the Ministry of Food Industry, the basic reasoning being to organize all aspects of production, from the production or mining of raw materials to processing, while reducing the number of management echelons. However, here, too, we encounter a difficult problem: this relationship also develops ad infinitum on the momentum of the development of production technology. For example, coal is not only used as the fuel in the generation of electricity, but is also used as a raw material in numerous sectors within the chemical industry. Agricultural products are not only supplied to the food industry, but also to many other industrial sectors (rubber, leather goods, pharmaceuticals, etc.).

Because the division of labor and cooperation in labor are highly dynamic processes capable of developing ad infinitum, they led to disputes and counter-productive efforts in the management of basic units, to difficulties and confusion in continuing the policy of subdividing and merging the ministries managing the sectors.

The problems mentioned above have not created much by way of obstacles to organizations. Most troublesome are the questions: why have numerous management

mechanisms been ineffective, why are the ministries and general departments most concerned with presenting requests to the Council of Ministers for a reduction in their plan norms, for the relaxation of economic-technical quotas and for more materials? Many persons maintain that these are enterprises that have yet to adopt economic accounting. Some socialist countries discussed this matter at great length and conducted serious pilot projects in economic accounting on the ministerial level. But many years have passed without one success being recorded, the basic reason being that the ministries were assigned to opposite functions, providing state management and engaging in production and business. This has led to numerous flaws:

- Because they must devote their effort to meeting plan norms, the ministries are forced to violate laws, laws which they themselves proposed to regulate production. For example, the Ministry of Forestry must meet the norms of its timber harvesting plan and also perform the task of forester.
- Because they have had to relax the law for themselves, the ministries have found it difficult to seriously deal, from the standpoint of state administration, with violations by enterprises which are outside the ministry but under state management.
- More regrettably, there have been cases in which a ministry, in the name of state ownership, has engaged in a dispute over interests with the other segments of the economy that still exist in an objective manner within society.

These flaws have weakened the economic function of the socialist state.

2. Dynamic Pilot Projects in Our Country

The problems in the organization of the ministries have given rise to many practical solutions of value, the direction of which is the continued improvement of management.

First, there is the lesson of unsuccessful experiments. We divided and merged ministries on many different occasions. For example, the food product industry was once under the Ministry of Industry and once under the Ministry of Agriculture. This shows that the restructuring of the apparatus by dividing or merging ministries has not proven to be a measure which yields the desired results.

Second, there are the pilot projects that have proven to possess vitality. These involve the formation of general departments which, although recorded in documents as having a state management function, actually exist and operate purely as a production-business company. Within these organizations are enterprises, stores, service units and institutes. The operations of the basic units within the general departments are very clearly

directed toward production with the aim of producing products under specific contracts between the general department and domestic and foreign customers.

On the basis of this reality, it can be asserted: a host of national production organizations have been and are forming in our country which are not administratively subordinate to any ministry and which are displaying vitality. This is an extremely important practical experience in finding a solution to the problem of how to organize the state apparatus.

3. Conclusions From the Lessons Learned in Organizing General Departments

The general departments subordinate to the Council of Ministers, the heads of which are appointed by the chairman of the Council of Ministers, are, in actuality, production organizations which are not subordinate to any ministry. This is truly a new form of organization in our country. It is an independent enterprise which operates autonomously within the economic system.

Even the "state management" function recorded in the statutes of the general departments actually only entails establishing production guidelines and organizing and inspecting the production of a specific sector. This is not at all beyond the framework of the task of the headquarters of a national monopoly.

Many researchers in the socialist countries continue to be confused. They have yet to free themselves from the biased thinking that the organized nature of socialism demands that an organization be managed by a higher organization—that an enterprise be part of a ministry. However, the question can be raised: why do many private enterprises exist in our country and in the other socialist countries independent of any ministry? Does the director of a national enterprise need an agency above him to guide and work with him, is he not qualified to operate on his own as the directors of private enterprises do? Moreover, if such were the case, would not private enterprises be without managers? Facts have shown that such is not the case. Private enterprises are managed. They operate within the framework of invisible but strict constraints of laws on production and business, of labor and social security policies. They may not violate the laws of the socialist state, except in cases when a representative of the law is not just or is corrupt and does not fulfill his duty.

Thus, the most important lesson here is that the enterprise must create products for society through activities which comply with the law. This is not achieved by making the enterprise administratively subordinate to a ministry. What reassures us is that the existence of independent enterprises which are not administratively subordinate to any ministry is a phenomenon that has been accepted, in practical terms, in our country and a host of other socialist countries.

4. Concerning a Plan for Simplifying the Management Apparatus

The basic objectives in simplifying the management apparatus involve two points: first, making the management apparatus effective; and second, making the management apparatus streamlined.

To achieve these objectives, it is necessary to divide the apparatus into two types of organizations with independent functions: production-business and state management. This solution is based on the following:

- Eliminating the conflict of functions within an organization—here the production-business function and the state management function—and regulating production and business operations through laws.
- Truly granting independence to production and business enterprises. The producer should be freed from every bureaucratic constraint of the "upper level" and truly establish direct relations with customers.
- On this basis, the effectiveness of the state management activities of the Council of Ministers will increase. The ministers will truly perform the function of participating in the strategic decisions of the state and no longer just be representatives of enterprises who negotiate ceilings and request lower production norms. No longer will they be persons who do work in place of the enterprise, which includes engaging in trade with customers.

In keeping with these views, the new approach can be implemented in the following stages:

- a. Separating the production organizations from the ministries in order to establish production general departments or national corporations. The form of organization which is the general department subordinate to the Council of Ministers can be maintained, but these general departments would not participate in state management work.

Under this organizational plan, enterprises would develop independently in accordance with the economic returns from production. For example, sugar mills would be able to sign short-term contracts with sugarcane growers but also be able to join together in production combines encompassing everything from the production of raw materials to the sale of products without the impediment of this combine being part of the Ministry of Agriculture or the Ministry of Industry.

- b. With the gradual separation of independent enterprises from the ministries, ministries without enterprises will emerge and will have but one remaining function, providing state management. This situation will create the objective conditions for merging ministries which have a purely state management function.

Then, to provide state management of all the industrial sectors, we will need to have only a ministry of industry. At the same time, we will only need to have a Ministry of Agriculture to manage agriculture in the broad sense, that is, as it relates to all matters concerning crops and livestock. In terms of management, the dividing line between these two ministries can be established on the basis of the Ministry of Agriculture managing everything from planting to harvesting and the Ministry of Industry managing everything from storage to processing. Here, management in no way means "controlling" the product. The product remains within the enterprise. Management is only regulation by means of policies and laws in the process of the product emerging from the production of raw materials through processing and to the consumer.

- c. While reorganizing the state management apparatus in production, we will also be resolving numerous other problems regarding planning, finances, pricing, supply, banking, education, science and other social activities. Within these fields, there are also many problems worthy of discussing. However, these problems relate to a different category, to a different view, which this article does not address.

On the momentum of development of the views concerning the restructuring now under way, the above view is gaining an increasing foothold within the socialist system. Numerous experiments have been conducted over the past many decades and met with resistance and been strongly denounced. But life continues to move ahead according to its own laws and is today developing experiments on a higher level. Bulgaria dismantled all its production-business ministries. The enterprises in each segment of the economy have voluntarily formed associations, which have economic interests as their objective and which exist independently within society, not administratively subordinate to any ministry. This is a dynamic reality worthy of consideration in the process of studying plans for restructuring the management apparatus in our country.

Distinguishing Between Function of the State Management of Economy and the Function of Business Management¹

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[Article by Nguyen Van Huy, deputy chief, the Central Economic Management Research Institute]

[Text] Under socialism, the state, representing the power of the people, exercises national ownership of the country's primary means of production. As a result, both the need and the capability emerge for the state to manage the entire national economy in accordance with a plan.

As the object of management, the national economy is a complete and complex system. It is the object of management which determines the form, structure and function of the manager. Under socialism, the manager of the national economy is the socialist state, social organizations (non-state) and each citizen under the leadership of the communist party.

In this spirit, in our country, the overall mechanism for managing the country is "the party leads, the working people exercise ownership, the state manages."

In our country, the management provided by the state has gradually evolved from mainly administrative management in the early stage (beginning in August 1945) to economic management in the subsequent stages (in the North: 1954) and especially since the reunification of the country (1975). The 1959 Constitution contained an entire chapter on "the state's leadership of economic activities." Decree 172-CP in 1973, which was supplemented by Decree 35-CP in 1981, defined the tasks, authority and responsibilities of the Council of Ministers, of the ministries in charge of the economic-technical sectors and of the ministries and commissions in charge of the functional agencies in economic management.

Thus, since the establishment of our state, we have gradually implemented the function of economic management. We have progressed from groping about and conducting experiments to conducting a general review to gain experience in order to gradually refine the management functions of the state, in general, and the ministries and people's committees, in particular. At the Fourth Party Congress in 1976, our party raised the matters of administrative-economic management and production-business management with the aim of stressing and confirming the economic management function of our state.

The resolution of the congress raised the requirement of "successfully combining production and business management, but not confusing the two, in order to achieve high economic returns."

In 1981, in order to codify the resolution of the Fourth Party Congress, we promulgated the Law on the Organization of the National Assembly and Council of State, the Law on the Organization of the Council of Ministers, Decree 35-CP on the functions, tasks and authority of the ministries in economic management, Resolution 10-NQ/TU of the Fourth Party Central Committee (1978) and Resolution 32-NQ/TU of the Political Bureau on organizational work (1981). The proceedings of the Fifth Party Congress once again confirmed the specifics and requirements of state management of the economy.

However, in the practical aspects of state management of the economy as well as in the direct management of businesses, we have failed to correctly and fully implement the provisions of these documents. At the same time, we have failed to promptly conduct preliminary reviews to gain experience in order to refine the documents that have been promulgated.

The Sixth Congress of the Party stated: it is necessary to carry out a major reform of the apparatus of the state agencies, from the central to the local and basic levels, and establish a unified system with a clear division of tasks, authority and responsibilities based on the principle of democratic centralism. It is necessary to clearly distinguish between the administrative-economic management function and the production-business management function and combine management by sector with management by locality and territory in a manner consistent with the special features of the socio-economic situation.

The resolution of the congress pointed out: "In the final analysis, the purpose of establishing the economic management role of state agencies on the central and local levels is to create every possible condition for basic economic units to operate efficiently. The state must control and guide the enterprises and business units within each segment of the economy by means of laws, economic policy and the policy on technical advances instead of deeply intervening in the business operations of enterprises. The law must define the boundaries beyond which the enterprises may not go and policies must compel enterprises to make the most profitable business decisions in accordance with the guidelines of the state plan." Following these guidelines will gradually eliminate the severe bureaucracy within the state apparatus, truly uphold the right of collective ownership of the working people, implement socialist democracy and, at the same time, bring about a shift from the management mechanism based on bureaucratic centralism and state subsidies to the mechanism based on economic accounting and socialist business principles.

Administrative-economic management is observing and summarizing the results of research and the experience gained in the direct management of businesses in order to:

- Formulate planning and plans (objectives and tasks);
- Map out important policies and procedures;
- Set policies for the development and application of science and technology and establish important economic-technical quotas and standards;
- Train the corps of cadres;
- Decide general organizational principles and key matters concerning cadres;

—Conduct inspections.

The direct management of business is complying with the guidelines and working within the sphere established by administrative-economic management in order to organize and coordinate in detail the reproduction process and solve the problems arising in this process each day, each week and each month in accordance with the principles of economic accounting and socialist business. This is the function of business units which have the status of an individual under the law and are financially autonomous.

In general, the relationship between these two functions is the relationship between strategy and tactics. Strategy is determined on the basis of tactical successes. The application of tactics must comply with strategy.

Within this relationship, there is no arbitrariness or rigidity. The state relaxes its control, but not to usher in anarchy. It tolerates reasonable diversity provided that it is controlled. The granting of management responsibilities goes hand in hand with maintaining discipline and order. There must be an open flow of information between the upper and lower levels to insure that the upper level is abreast of all the necessary information of the lower levels and is not dependent upon the subjective desires of the lower levels. And, although there are regulations common to all, it is still necessary to make exceptions in special cases.

Within the diversified model of development based on the revamped economic management mechanism, the state can, to varying degrees, transfer some of its management work to the lower levels.

In summary, the state manages the economy through two functions:

- The administrative-economic management function, or the state management provided by the various levels of the administration and the management agencies on the upper level;
- The direct management of business by basic units and economic organizations.

The person who heads a ministry or one of the people's committees on the various levels is not only completely responsible for his decisions, but must also be responsible (as the minister or the chairman of the people's committee) for the results of the business management of the basic economic units subordinate to his ministry or within his locality. For example, if basic industrial units lack coal and must cease production, the Ministry of Energy must bear the responsibility. If textile units lack thread and workers must take time off or if the products produced are of poor quality, the Minister of Light Industry must bear the responsibility.... These are only examples. The specific degree of responsibility must be determined on a case by case basis.

The general director of a federation of enterprises or a corporation which manages an entire sector nationwide is appointed by the state and assigned the responsibility of implementing a number of aspects of state management of the economic-technical sector of which he is in charge. We should not confuse, combine as one or totally separate the administrative-economic management function and the function of directly managing business.

Confusing, combining as one and, in particular, allowing administrative-economic management to encroach upon production and business are the main features of bureaucracy and are harmful to production. But it is also a mistake to completely separate the two and say that administrative-economic management and business are totally independent and in no way related.

In practice, there are very many cases in which the different levels of administration must fulfill the administrative-economic management function (because the economic situation is unstable and many difficulties are faced) and still perform a number of jobs related to business management (the minister doing the work of finding supplies, finding foreign currency for the enterprise...).

Even units whose main function is business management must offer their opinions in administrative-economic management work when, in light of their own realities, they see something which is not appropriate.

The dividing line between administrative-economic management and business management is the dividing line between the function of the various levels of state administration and the function of the basic units of the national economy in business management. The objects and tools of management on either side of this line are not entirely the same. Management objectives are different in nature and scope and the management apparatus operates on the basis of different principles.

In the entire work of managing the national economy, it is necessary to clearly distinguish between and properly combine these two management functions within one system. Good coordination between these two management functions must be reflected in coordination among the scale of the state management apparatus, the scale of the management apparatus at business units and the scale of development of the national economy and between the agencies which provide state economic management and the management organizations of basic units, with no intermediary echelons.

Clearly distinguishing between and properly combining administrative-economic management and business management is an important basis for reorganizing the current economic management system and management mechanism of the national economy.

Footnotes

1. We suggest that the concept "business" be used in its broad sense consisting of lawful economic activities aimed at serving the interests of basic units in production, circulation and the services. "Production-business" can be understood as production being the most important activity and being outside business.

Round Table Conference

The Renewal of Our Literature and Arts Within the Party's Cause of Renovation*

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[Text] On 9 March 1988, with the aim of charting a clear ideological course in the current renewal of our literature and arts in keeping with the spirit of Political Bureau Resolution 05-NQ/TU on "Revamping and Raising the Standards of Leadership and Management of Literature, the Arts and Culture, Unleashing Creativity and Bringing Literature, the Arts and Culture to a New Level of Development," TAP CHI CONG SAN held a round table conference called "The Renewal of Our Literature and Arts Within the Party's Cause of Renovation." Attending the seminar were Tran Do, Nguyen Van Hanh and Tu Son (the Culture, Literature and Arts Department of the Party Central Committee); the artists Duong Vien (general secretary of the Association of Fine Artists) and Xuan Trinh (deputy general secretary of the Association of Performing Artists); the writers and poets Bui Hieu, Te Hanh and Hoang Trung Thong (the Writers' Association); Ngoc Tu (TAP CHI TAC PHAM VAN HOC); Le Luu (TAP CHI VAN NGHE QUAN DOI); the literary theorists, critics and researchers Hong Chuong (the Vietnam Writers' Association); Ho Si Vinh (TAP CHI NGHIEN CUU VAN HOA NGHE THUAT), Nguyen Van Luu (Van Hoc Publishing House), Thieu Mai (VAN NGHE Newspaper), Phong Le and Bui Cong Hung (the Institute of Literature), Phan Cu De and Ha Minh Duc (Hanoi University), Phong Luu (Hanoi Teachers College Number 1), etc. Also attending were Ha Xuan Truong, the editor-in-chief, together with the Editorial Board and the cadres of the Culture and Education Department of TAP CHI CONG SAN.

The conference began with TAP CHI CONG SAN Editor-in-Chief Ha Xuan Truong explaining the objectives and requirements of the conference and the method by which it would be conducted, clearly stating the need to achieve renewal of literature and the arts against the broad background of the party's renovation campaign: "Renovation is a matter of survival, is the spirit, the revolutionary essence of each activity of our party, state and society. Renovation is not something we are moved to by inspiration, but a choice to which we have given thought and are making with high determination and great resolve. It is an arduous process, one which demands knowledge and a scientific approach. Therefore, it is to be expected that we will be debating and

reexamining one or many matters, including basic matters. Renovation will sometimes mean looking back, "going back," but always for the purpose of moving ahead. Our party's renovation campaign does not begin with nothing, but with the enormous achievements and even the consequences of serious mistakes that have persisted for many years in the economic and social fields. In achieving renovation, theoretical work is of foremost importance. As we discuss renewal in our literature and arts, perhaps we should concern ourselves with the following matters: 1) Evaluating the actual state of our literature and arts yesterday and today; 2) The relationship between literature-the arts and politics or the leadership of the party and the creative freedom of writers and artists; 3) Literature, the arts and reality; 4) The mechanism by which literature and the arts are managed and the mode of leadership of literature and the arts; and 5) Renewal on the part of writers and artists themselves. I suggest that you examine these matters from the pinnacle of the viewpoints of the 6th Party Congress and on the basis of scientifically analyzing practice because, according to Lenin, when making an evaluation, one cannot trust the spoken word. We can rely upon inspiration and emotion even less. What we must do is bravely and squarely face the truth but "definitely demand the most accurate data possible and that this data be printed and can be verified in every respect.... If data is unavailable, it is necessary to question persons who are familiar with the subject at hand from two or more perspectives, absolutely 'question them thoroughly' and in the presence of witnesses." Hoang Trung Thong: the Political Bureau has issued the "resolution on culture, literature and the arts." Along with all the other members of literary and art circles, I am very happy because I consider this to be the new platform of the party on culture, literature and the arts in the current situation. This resolution continues, builds upon and clarifies the directives and resolutions issued by the party on culture, literature and the arts over a period of many years while charting a course for our thinking, for renewal in literary and art activities.

Regarding the matters that have been raised, I would like to concentrate on two points:

The first is the issue of the party and literature-the arts. That the party leads literature and the arts is a necessity. No one can deny this. The party leads through its line, policies and thinking. The party also leads through its organization, in keeping with the functions of this organization.

Generally speaking, the line and policies of the party on literature and the arts are correct. Were they not, how could we have built such a large and beautiful literary and art front as we have today, how could we have swept away the influences of the literature and arts of old-style colonialism and neo-colonialism? But there have been times when our understanding of Marxism as it applies to literature and the arts has been simplistic and rigid, which, as we know has limited us, even led to mistakes.

The directives and resolutions of the party set forth major guidelines. Concretizing these guidelines and making deductions from them must be done by the persons who work in literature and the arts. The opinion of one leader of the party is no reason to praise, find fault with or ban a work of literature or art. Everyone has the right to express his opinions. An individual may listen or not listen to the opinions of an individual leader or a collective of leaders, but leadership agencies and press offices must fulfill their function. They have the right to express their opinions.

Although it works closely with each person, the party ultimately leads literature and the arts through the professional organizations. It can be neither too strict nor too lax. Rather, it must monitor the situation and correct mistakes. The party has opinions but does not express them in the form of edicts. It assembles writers and artists around itself but does not make them all fit the same mold or shape them all in the same image. Nor does it allow anyone to use a temporary mistake as a reason to deny the necessity for leadership by the party.

Here, one issue arises: the relationship between literature-the arts and politics. The literature and arts of every era have their own ideological and, in narrow terms, political nature. Literature and the arts are closely tied to politics. This is natural and requires no further explanation. Yet why is it that politics has changed—one class replacing another, one system replacing another down through history—but literary and art masterpieces still exist, are still read, are still passionately revered? Although he once spoke about the "immortality of the masterpieces," Marx did not explain why they are immortal and although the Marxists in the Soviet Union have frequently debated this issue, they have not drawn any truly satisfactory conclusions. We will also discuss this question but, instead of doing so now, I would like to go on to another matter: adopting new thinking in literature and the arts.

Do writers need to adopt new thinking? They do need to adopt new thinking very much, very much. But to do this, they must first know the old. I would like to ask: what is the old thinking? Not many persons are able to answer this question or, if they do, their answer is only a cursory one. Now, however, we are beginning to learn, but only beginning. The struggle to adopt new thinking is a necessary and timely struggle but it will also be a rather long struggle. There is much old thinking that must be changed but it is thinking that is undemocratic or lacking in democracy that must be changed first. Democratizing thinking, creativity, criticism, theory and even organization is a pressing requirement. Democratization differs from liberalization, even though our party still espouses creative freedom. Democratization is respect for the right of each person to be a collective master. Liberalization creates chaos and disregard for principles. Lenin once said that we must fight egalitarianism of every form, oppose putting everyone on a level plane and pressing everyone into the same mold, and combat the

administrative approach to literature and the arts. But Lenin also opposed all disorder, all absence of principle and party involvement. These words are still the guidelines for each of our activities in literature and the arts today.

Phong Le: with regard to the matter of evaluating literature, my attention is drawn by the opinions expressed by Nguyen Quang Sang and Ho Ngoc during a meeting with the general secretary, opinions which hold that the quality of our literature has become quite poor. I maintain that the meaning of "poor" as used here is unclear. Poor compared to what?

Nguyen Van Hanh: poor compared to our neighbors.

Phong Le: true, is it poor compared to other literatures? Compared to the past? Or compared to the new realities, the new needs of the public? Comparisons must be made in order to know whether our literature is rich or poor. And, if it is "poor," in which form is it poor, where is it poor?

As for myself, I do not think that the quality of our literature has become poorer over the past 10 years. I see it as developing, as developing in new, rich and complex forms. Some aspects of this development are gratifying, others of which are worrisome. If we look at the number of book titles, the number of copies of books and the number of types of books published, at creative trends, especially since the 1980's, and at public opinion in the face of such phenomena as "Facing the Sea," "Tram Islet," "Leaf Shedding Season in the Orchard," "A Bygone Time," "On the Opposite Bank of a Dream,"...we see repeated and vigorous development, development unprecedented. For a new work to assume a life of its own in public opinion and become the subject of debate is something to be welcomed, not feared. What we should fear is times when the situation becomes confused due to many different causes, including the complexity of the socio-economic situation.

A second opinion to which my attention has been drawn concerns illustration. Our literature has been more than simply an illustrative literature over the past several decades. Nguyen Minh Chau wrote very forcefully about this malady. I read what he wrote and found myself being terribly "persuaded." But having thought about it and "waking up," I now feel that the matter needs to be discussed again. While it is true that this malady has existed within our literature, to call it an inherent malady which encompasses everything is to malign our literature to excess. Even in the war, our literature created worthy values. I contend that the word "illustrate" is not entirely bad. To "illustrate" the heroism of the nation as was done in "Mothers Take Up Arms" and "The Mahogany Forest" was unparalleled and was not something that could easily be done by just anyone.

Of course, the weaknesses, inadequacies and the one-sidedness of a work of art, namely, that, compared to reality, to the demands of the public today, only one aspect of the work is being stressed, are also things which must be thoroughly pointed out. Only in this way is it possible to give direction to renewal. However, the causes of the situation must also be fully revealed: the circumstances of the war; shallowness and a lack of foresight in some aspects of leadership and guidance; and the inexperience of theorists and critics. Some of the causes were even to be found in the skills and talents of writers and artists!

I think that in this evaluation, we need to adopt an historical perspective and the view that things are still in the process of developing. Perhaps no one has forgotten that the 1945 milestone began the new literature with a return to the masses, more than 95 percent of whom were illiterate. Of the three requirements set by President Ho with regard to writing, "writing for whom" was the one of foremost importance. Literature had to return to the people, go back to the people and, in the course of the revolution, tap the creativity of the people. Then came the war, a war which lasted for more than 30 years. The literature written during the war and for a public at war was completely different from peace time literature. Not one word of protest was heard from anyone. Under those circumstances, the matter of foremost importance with which every writer had to be concerned was the survival of the nation. Every capability had to be mobilized to achieve this goal. Each value had to be evaluated on the basis of this standard. But now let us return for a moment to the literary situation that existed prior to 1945 through the popular "Anthology of Modern Literature" published by Van Hoc Publishing House. A re-evaluation of Han Mac Tu, Vu Trong Phung and others, even Tu Luc Van Doan, is necessary at this point in time. But it would not be proper to affirm, or demand the "reinstatement" of, the values they represent to a degree beyond what they deserve. And, it is also both normal and acceptable for an evaluation of these phenomena associated with the past to be strict. The need of Miss Nhung, Miss Loan and Miss Tuyet for liberation of the individual in Tu Luc Van Doan literature was legitimate and necessary but the need to harbor and protect a Miss Dau in "Extinguishing the Lantern" was perhaps a more pressing and critical need.

Bui Hien: something that had to be done immediately....

Phong Le: right, real literary values. Consequently, it is logical for them to be placed above all else, and not only in that time period.

Returning to the evaluation—it is necessary to clearly define where we begin and what our objectives are. Emphasizing where we begin and demanding that we adopt an historical perspective do not mean that we are being conservative. And emphasizing what our objectives are in the face of the demands of renovation does not mean that we are negating the achievements that

have been recorded. We should avoid pushing ourselves or one another to extreme poles simply because of the words or terminology we use or the intonation in our voice. In the observations and evaluation we make, combining an historical perspective and the view that things are still in the process of developing is surely the best path to follow if we are to arrive at the truth.

Bui Hien: the law of the natural development of history is that new, young writers emerge during each period to augment, succeed and replace their predecessors. In our Vietnam especially, the division of the different generations of writers coincides with the various periods of the revolution. This is proof that the corps of writers has continued to be closely tied to the life of the nation, to the destiny of the country, in a stage of history filled with enormous changes, the thorough and pathetic nature of which will become more clearly evident as time passes. History and the people are the main starting point and the beautiful inspiration of writers. Although there has not yet been a true abundance of generalization and deduction (the essence of literature), writers and poets have at least performed the work of reflecting, describing and recreating the picture of society, of the country in the face of stern challenges, recreating them in all their shades and forms, recreating them with soul and the strong, hot breath of the times. I think that this is clear illustration of the relationship between politics and literature—the arts, between the line of the party and the creative activities of writers and artists.

In the terminology of literary criticism, we often talk about the uniqueness of a writer, about his individual approach, his individual style, etc. But I remember back in the early 1960's, during a debate at the office of the Writers' Association, when writers addressed the issue of ability. This was after attending a most thought-provoking talk by Pham Van Dong to writers and artists. Ability, it is a word which says and demands much.

It speaks of personal qualities, character and independent thinking. At the same time, it demands serious, mature thinking, a sense of responsibility for what one says and a flesh and blood closeness to the realities of life and the ideals toward which we are striving. These are clearly high requirements, are very strict demands.

Perhaps because of these reasons and many other objective and subjective conditions, writers have not developed much and have yet to achieve high results from their efforts. In the bitter fights against the French and American imperialists, who were many times stronger than we, the ability of the writer matched and coincided with the tenacity of the entire nation. When that page of history turned and it became necessary to think about the difficult and serious problems associated with rebuilding the country, building socialism, molding the new ethics and establishing new interpersonal relations, it became clear that the breadth of vision and the range of thinking of writers were limited, were inadequate, that their thinking was even confused. This is particularly

true at this point in time, a time of rapid and serious decline in social ethics and the emergence of many new psychologies, which have been developing in an unwholesome direction. As a result, writing has become a matter of picking subjects at random or avoiding issues.

But we cannot fail to note that, in the early 1980's, that is, only 5 years after the entire country was liberated and began the work of restoration and construction, a rather strong and distinct change occurred within a number of literary and art sectors, especially in prose, theatrical art and cinematography.

Writers dared to address many troublesome issues and bring to light the bad things, the inertia, the weaknesses and the arbitrariness which have not only been impeding our progress, but which have also threatened to push society over the edge. At the same time, they have proposed plans and ways to maintain our ethics and human dignity or developed measures for building the country, resolving the difficulties we face and moving ahead.

"During the past several years, literature has brought much to life;" "the writer is more highly conscious of the complexities of reality;" "we have the momentum needed to attack the negative and build models of a new social life, both materially and spiritually"—these are some of the opinions expressed at the literary seminars held in 1985 and 1986.

I would now like to turn to the factors that have held us back.

In his speech to writers and artists late last year, Nguyen Van Linh stressed the restrictive environment that has long prevented literature and the arts from developing as desired. This is also a reality. What have the causes of this situation been?

One must take into consideration the circumstances of the 30 years of bitter war (some of which took the form of a civil war) and the lengthy partitioning of the country. There are many things about combat operations, social life and the private thoughts of people that cannot be related fully, completely or in thorough detail. The second cause, a subjective cause, is also important and is one in which we are now gaining experience so that it can be corrected. It is leadership and guidance that have been crude and inclined toward the pragmatic at some times and places and have sometimes turned into tight, restrictive controls. In more than a few cases, the function of literature and the arts has been viewed from the perspective of pragmatic socialism. We have only been aware of the direct, external and simple impact and not conscious of the most precious aspect of a work, namely, that it often brings to light things which are hiding, are subtle as it penetrates the heart of man via winding and hidden lanes and pathways.

There have also been rigid views concerning the character and essence of man, views which place persons within a class framework. There has been a tendency to demand the affirmation of life in a direction which conforms with a position or policy at a time when events and the actual situation are moving in the opposite direction. If these events, if this situation were accurately and bravely reflected (for this, the fault lies with the author), it might have helped bring issues out into the open, modify positions and correct mistakes that have taken far too long to recognize.

There has also not been truly precise adherence to the thinking: the purpose of literature and the arts describing "life" is to make statements on "morals." Literature and the arts reflect only general thinking on the fate of man, on good and evil, the forms of which are many and complex, even confusing, and on the need to be concerned with each individual, his joys and sorrows, his contradictions and suffering, his specific dreams, in order to evoke mature thinking concerning the path to be taken by the community in the spirit of a real and true humanism.

The resolutions of the party on literature and the arts have further broadened the creative horizon. The work to be done now lies with the writer and artist. To be sure, very many efforts must be made to bring the new freedom into play: delving deeply into life, expanding one's knowledge of culture in every respect (including one's knowledge of philosophy), cultivating the skills of one's craft, etc. I would also like to express a few personal thoughts here. Literature and the arts strive for beauty. They also have the task of criticizing in order to make us detest that which is ugly and evil. But they must also guard against a tendency which is not good, one which Gorki brought to light in an essay, namely, the tendency in the thinking of the writer or artist to be pessimistic, skeptical and negative, which demeans man. On the basis of the diverse, rich and ever widening common foundation of literature, should we not see the emergence of strong characters placed within the environment of the current campaign to adopt new thinking, the emergence of persons who think and act and whose thoughts and actions might be right and successful but might also be a failure, even a tragedy, but who possess a strong desire to move ahead, to struggle to become the masters of themselves and cultivate zest for life—persons who possess solid characters and abilities?

Nguyen Van Hanh: with regard to evaluating the situation in literature and the arts in the recent stage, attention should, in my opinion, be given to evaluating both creative efforts and activities in the fields of theory and criticism, evaluating both our organization and our corps. In this evaluation, we must adopt an historical perspective. At the same time, we must adopt the perspective of the present (that is, must view issues from the pinnacle of the current renovation campaign) because the purpose of the revolutionary understanding of history is also to successfully perform the work we are doing

now and will be doing in the future. We look back on the past not only to see what has been accomplished, to see strengths and weaknesses, but also to draw lessons and experience, lessons in methodology in organizing, building and leading literature and the arts. During the past 40 years, under the leadership of the party, our literature and arts have recorded many achievements and made numerous contributions in the two recent wars of resistance. We have the right to be proud of them. Were we to do it over again, we would not be able to do much better. However, in keeping with the spirit of renovation, the revolution has entered a different stage and the demands and characteristics of literary and art activities in peace time, in this era of broader democracy and greater openness, are sure to be different than they were before. Therefore, we must re-examine many phenomena and fields with the attitude of squarely facing the truth, in the spirit of revolutionary criticism and must correct mistaken or outmoded ways of thinking and acting in order to make steadier and more rapid progress.

The issue of literature-the arts and politics, which has arisen time and time again, has recently re-emerged within literary and art circles. Literature-the arts and politics are, generally speaking clearly evident in Marxist thinking as two forms of social consciousness. But, as two different activities of man, as two different fields of social life, they deserve to be more carefully examined. On the basis of the thinking that there are three fundamental types of human activity—scientific activity, practical activity and creative activity—the foundation exists for placing special emphasis upon the profoundly practical nature of political activity and the uniquely creative nature of literary and art activity.

Politics and literature-the arts can share lofty ideals, such as freedom, equality and fraternity or independence, freedom and happiness. But to achieve these ideals, politics sets specific targets for each stage and plans the steps to be taken accordingly. Literature and the arts, on the other hand, immediately think of the ultimate goal and illuminate everything from the pinnacle of ideals. Politics is struggle for power, for the interests of the class, the nation. It mobilizes each and every capability in order to achieve the established target: spiritual and material, individuals and the organization, experience and science, will power and tactics, and the strength of reason, confidence and even violent force. Literary and art activities are aimed at creating works which express the emotions, the thoughts and the dreams and aspirations of man about life, about society. Literature and art are activities of individual artists, of creative individuals, are a free activity in the true sense of the word because, in these activities, man is free from narrow constraints, is "liberated" so that he can speak his most deeply held thoughts. The strengths of literature and the arts are life, the spirit of humanism, beauty, sincerity, uniqueness and the new.

Some say that politics is short-range while literature and the arts are long-range. Actually, such is not the case, great politics as well as great literature are enduring.

Shallow politics and mediocre literature and art quickly fade away. The only difference is that the development of politics follows the path of dialectical negation. The achievements of the past only exist as a premise to, exist indirectly within, the achievements of the present. Works of literature and art exist and pass from one person to another in their original and most simple form, a form not duplicated, as direct aesthetic objects of each person in the different generations of the public.

With its high level of organization and its strength, politics strongly controls every aspect of social life, every field of human activity, not just literature and the arts. It is not surprising that the most important tasks are called political tasks. The line on culture, literature and the arts is essentially the political line in culture, literature and the arts. But literature and the arts, as mentioned above, possess strengths of their own, exert a reciprocal influence upon politics and are irreplaceable in human life.

For the party to lead literature and the arts, it must clearly realize that there is a unity between politics and literature-the arts but that they are not synonymous. Because, if literature and the arts are viewed as synonymous with politics, they will lose their role and even be in danger of being destroyed. As a result, politics would be unable to grow stronger and would weaken. It is a necessity for the party to lead literature and the arts but leadership is not merely a matter of power. It is a major responsibility as well. Therefore, it is necessary to take a new approach, to raise standards in order to provide knowledgeable leadership in accordance with laws.

Ha Xuan Truong: we have so far raised major issues of principle but we should now try to delve into specifics.

Ho Si Vinh: our achievements in literature and the arts during the past 40 years under the leadership of the party are an historic fact. Their importance and position are as asserted by the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Congresses. However, due to perceptions, the limitations imposed by history and the standards of the corps, literature and the arts have not developed smoothly. Rather, rightism and leftism have emerged and developed whenever the opportunity has arisen. In our country, in contrast to many other countries, we have waged intense and thorough struggles against rightism (including within the field of organization) while only criticizing leftism in a somewhat mild and less than thorough manner and sometimes even considering leftist phenomena to be nothing more than shortcomings among the people.

In my opinion, "openness," creative freedom and the freedom to criticize today mean waging simultaneous and relentless struggles against every manifestation of rightism and leftism.

In our literature and arts, the tendency to be illustrative is real and has existed for many years. But this situation is not unique to us. Many of the great literature and arts of fraternal countries have found themselves in the same

situation for a time. This trend existed in literature and the arts during the two wars. It was still evident 10 years ago and has not lessened much in the past 1 or 2 years. Why is this? First, it is because our perception of the role and function of literature and the arts has been tilted toward shallow politicalization. The arts, in addition to right-wrong and good-bad, must also reflect beauty. Secondly, it has been due to the incorrect concept on the part of writers and artists concerning artistic truth. As a result, the truth has been buried deep beneath the heavy weight of personal impressions (not the creative individual) in the face of confusing events, as a consequence of which the public has frequently not even seen the main character or theme.

Literature and the arts are always work of the times, of the country, are the noble and sacred destiny of the creative person. Therefore, reducing art to the mundane and patronizing "gullible" viewers of the arts, as are being done today, are truly reprehensible. They are the twin of the commercialization of art that we have been harshly denouncing for many years. This can be seen, for example, in the useless "one thing ancient, two things thrilling" (something from the ancient past, some espionage and love), in cheap plays and in a number of phenomena which reflect a pandering to ordinary tastes of consumers in cinematography, paintings, sculpture, etc. It is regrettable that phenomena associated with naturalism have also infiltrated some talented artists. Consider the Luu Quang Vu phenomenon, for example. In the hope of initiating a dialogue concerning the pressing issues of the day, he achieved success in "I and We" and "The Source of Light in Life." But some of his other plays have faltered and their artistic results have been poor due to the absence of a clear theme, due to a hasty and sloppy writing style, etc.

I would like to say something in addition about freedom of thinking and the responsibility of the writer and artist. Freedom of thinking is not merely complaining about and finding fault with the constraints of the mechanism or old and mistaken ways of doing things. Rather, this freedom must basically rest upon the freedom to work of society and oneself. It is, above everything else, the right to write the truth and "the right to not write poorly." To accomplish these things, the artist's sense of responsibility as a citizen and his social character must be constantly forged because these are the foremost qualities of every artist. To write the truth but only with a passion for presenting oddities associated with external phenomena, with indignation toward things unreasonable, with euphemisms being used for negative phenomena, with a penchant for digging in the pile of trash of yesterday... is to produce literature which is no higher in stature than the literature of the storyteller. In the name of writing the truth, Luu Quang Vu forgets the other "half of the truth": the heroic activities, altruism and humanism of the mothers and wives of Vietnam; the power of nature being harnessed in the Da River, the Tri An River, etc. But saying this does not mean that he does not have the

right to write about the negative. No, no one is stopping him. But let him do so from the correct point of view and by a method which is highly responsible, as Maiakovski did.

The responsibility of the writer and artist as a citizen must also be expressed in concern for the major issues of mankind, such as nuclear war and peace, the environment, the population explosion... Permit me to say that, today, some of our writers and artists still lack a sense of responsibility regarding these issues of the times.

In summary, in my opinion, the renewal taking place within literature and the arts is not merely a matter of correcting the mistakes, of one side or another, of a period. It is even less a matter of exaggerating or "blowing out of proportion" a number of cases of negative phenomena in order to rebuke a particular organization or individual. Many times more difficult for us is to introduce a new way of reading the legacy of Marxist theory on literature, the arts and aesthetics and our party's line on literature and the arts on the basis of accurately analyzing practice in order to draw new conclusions for our literary and art life today.

Tran Do: I will speak first about the need for renewal.

Renewal stems from the requirements and task of the revolution. Years ago, this task was to win independence and freedom. The people could only be free if the country were independent. Therefore, there was a unity between the general and the specific. Now, our goal is for the country to be strong and the people to be prosperous. The country can only be strong if each citizen is prosperous. There must be a unity between private interests and common interests. In practice, however, we have entered the new stage with the same mindset we had during the stage of attempting to win independence and freedom. For example, we still agitate among farmers to have them fulfill their grain obligation in the same way that we did during the war.

Second, there is the relationship between literature-the arts and politics. Nguyen Van Hanh has already addressed this matter. Literature and the arts serve politics. This is self-evident. The resolution of the Political Bureau defined the three political tasks of literature and the arts as: intensifying the process of democratization; contributing to the construction and defense of the fatherland; and molding and perfecting the new, socialist man and woman. In practice, however, we have continually made mistakes in three areas:

—We have considered literature and the arts to be synonymous with politics. That is, we keep viewing and evaluating literature and the arts as we do politics. Although the party does not say this, the psychology of society is such (including the literary and art public). Although the public is now more dynamic, this psychology persists.

—There is the concept that all the other sectors have a political task except literature and the arts, whose only task is to serve politics.

—Political activists are considered to be above and to have the right to correct activists in literature and the arts (even though the writer or artist might be Nguyen Tuan or Nguyen Cong Hoan and the political activist might be a party affairs cadre). The greatest hardship is to be criticized as not closely adhering to the political line, as a result of which the psychology persists that there is indeed a need to closely adhere to the political line. In my opinion, in politics, there is the value system of politics; in literature and the arts, there are separate standards of evaluation—the work and its author.

Third, there is the issue of renewal in culture, literature and the arts. We need to take a look at the restructuring under way in the Soviet Union. Recently, the newspaper VAN NGHE carried a translation of an article entitled "The Destiny of Socialist Culture." This article was originally published in KOMMUNIST and signed by the review's editorial board. There is reason to believe that this article represents the official voice of the Central Committee of the CPSU. It provides a solid basis for evaluating the situation surrounding the reform of culture and the arts within the Soviet Union. The article also contains many Marxist-Leninist theoretical arguments on the nature and role of culture and the arts, the special characteristics of the arts and the fundamental principles concerning the party's leadership of culture and the arts. Specifically, there is Lenin's attitude, an attitude tantamount to a principle, toward literature and the arts: the attitude of a serious politician toward the writer and artist, which is not simply an attitude of "elevating" or "worshipping" the writer or artist or, conversely, only "pointing out mistakes" and "correcting" them.... The most important aspects here are to understand objective reality, understand the thoughts and questions reflected in the work and discovering lessons relevant to social life within the work.

There is also, for example, the matter of certain authors and works being "restored" in the Soviet Union. These restorations have an importance of their own. The greatest significance is that restructuring need not conceal the truth, no matter how painful it might be. Another is that the people are fully entitled to examine existing spiritual products and the people themselves have the right and the ability to determine these values.

At the February 1988 plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, Gorbachev set forth the main principles of party work in cultural matters and the spiritual field of restructuring. They are: democracy, confidence in man, searching for, understanding and encouraging creativity, supporting talent...

In summary, the essence of restructuring in culture, literature and the arts within the Soviet Union is a return to the brilliant thinking of Lenin, thinking very consistent with the truth and the laws of life. We must ponder and learn from what is being done in the Soviet Union. We have every basis to place our trust in the people and should not "choose what they eat."

Thieu Mai: many comrades have stressed the need for an historical perspective in this evaluation. I feel that they are being somewhat overly concerned. Allow me to be specific. In his article, Phan Cu De asserts that for Nguyen Dang Manh and Lai Nguyen An to write in the way that they did represents a tendency to negate the past. I think that even in articles as critical as An's, who himself states in the first paragraph that we did indeed make contributions in the recent stage, the purpose of the article was not to cite achievements, but to stress aspects that are not yet good, stress the need for renewal in a manner consistent with current requirements. Is it because they are afraid that what they have done will be negated that some comrades take the view that we should adopt an historical perspective? Such is not at all necessary, comrades. We sit here talking about right and wrong. But ours are only the opinions of a group. In practice, right and wrong make themselves clear. From now on, any work that is not accepted by the public has been rejected. As regards re-evaluating recent achievements, I feel that we should specifically state which works are correct and the extent to which some works are incorrect. Recently, we have continued to speak in generalities. Now, how do we correctly re-evaluate Hanh Mac Tu, Vu Trong Phung, the new poetry and a host of other matters? And thus, we must also re-examine the research projects in these matters. Perhaps we are facing the following reality: in the recent past, anyone who has done much has made many mistakes. As Tran Do said, renewal stems from the common need of the revolution to adopt a new approach. I think that this is a very difficult matter. Each step taken will give rise to new issues which we will have to examine together and resolve. Allow me to cite one specific issue—the issue of literature-the arts and reality. Today is not the first time that we have said that literature and the arts must keep abreast of life. In years past, many documents and slogans were adopted regarding this matter, such as "go to progressive places, join with progressive persons." As I think back on it now, I feel sad: did this mean that one could not go to or write about places that were not progressive? Delving into practice meant that one had to go to Dinh Cong and Quynh Luu. Were these the only models? Thus, what is real life in its development? Should we go to and reflect the truth at places such as the villages described in "What Did That Night Yield?"

I have one other small thought concerning the current state of theory and criticism. I maintain that there is now a crisis in this field. I am a journalist and know whereof I speak. Some persons write articles that cannot be published because they contain no theory whatsoever. Others want to take a new approach but keep going around in circles. And, when you go to a meeting, everyone you see is "salt and pepper" (that is, their hair has turned gray). As for myself, I hope that many different, even contrary, opinions are forthrightly debated.

Ha Xuan Truong: we have opened two issues: making this evaluation and the relationship between literature-the arts and politics but we still have not probed them in depth.

In a number of newspapers there has recently been more talk about the shortcomings of literature and the arts but no explanation as to why we do not have great literature and great arts.

While it is true that we look back on yesterday from the perspective of today and the needs of development, we must also look back on and analyze the past from an historical perspective. These two factors are not contradictory. Taking an historical perspective means placing issues and events within the context of specific conditions—the historical circumstances that caused their emergence. To look at yesterday correctly is to see both strengths and weaknesses, to clearly distinguish between historical inevitability and the subjective impact of man, the role and responsibility of the collective and the individual. And are we taking an historical perspective because we fear being negated? In my opinion, just the opposite can be said because if we did fear being negated, we would not dare look back on history in an objective and comprehensive way. It must also be said that, from the standpoint of methodology, the purpose of taking an historical perspective is not only to make judgments about yesterday, but also to make judgments about today and forecast the future.

I agree with Tran Do: the need to carry out renovation is a common need. Renovation does not mean that the Sixth Congress negated what the Fifth Congress did or that the 5th Congress negated what the Fourth Congress did. Recently, in our criticism and evaluation of the situation in literature and the arts in past years, the approach taken has been one-sided and has given the impression that things done in the past are being improperly and unfairly negated, such as the Third Congress of Writers. In every event, there are likely to be things that are right and things that are wrong. Observations, therefore, must be based on the practical aspects of the things accomplished. This is the only way to be scientific and objective. It is not a matter of who but a matter of serving the common cause. We should not think that anyone who speaks about being modern and is outspoken in his criticism is someone who desires renovation while anyone who looks back on yesterday and speaks about achievements is someone who does not.

Xuan Trinh: I agree with Nguyen Van Hanh and Thieu Mai that we look back on the past to gain experience for today and that evaluating a stage of literature and the arts is not something that can be done from the perspective of only one point in time.

In 1975, immediately after the entire country had been liberated, we sent many theater companies to the South. They performed, among others, such plays as "Our Company Commander," the modern theater plays "Vo

Thi Sau" and "Central Highlands Thunder"(folk songs) and the popular opera productions "The Piece of Bran" and "Quan Am Thi Kinh," causing quite a stir. Many in the audiences cried. I think that socialist realist literature in the war had the strength not only to move us, but also to move our fellow countrymen in the newly liberated zones. The public was very sincerely moved. No one was faking. But only several months later, these companies had not audiences. This was because our literature was shifting from war time to peace time but did not make this transition promptly and thus found itself in crisis. This crisis was real and the moving emotions that preceded it were also real. In evaluating the theater during the resistance against the United States is our starting point that period of time itself or the aesthetic demands of today? Bui Hien and I once traveled to the battlefield together. I visited southern Laos, Quang Tri, Thua Thien,... If anyone had told me back then to write bad things about the war, I would not have been able to do so because I did not see anything bad. Life was very heroic, very moving. At that time, the artist either did not see or was not interested in trivial wrongs. Back then, they were very sincere about things which we see today as simple and naive. But we cannot write today as we did back then. Life is different. These are things to which attention must be given when making this evaluation.

Were there strict controls in place within literature and art back then? There were, but it was not only the leadership of literature and the arts that was strict. When I wrote "Vietnam, My Country," many very critical opinions were expressed by the public because I described a very fierce fight being waged by our armed forces in Vinh Linh, even though I was only reflecting a small portion of that reality. I think that this happened not out of any feeling of bitterness, but as a result of one simple premise: the fight required that many more persons be mobilized for the front, not that they be struck with fear. In view of this need, I revised my work accordingly. However, as I look back on that stage, I still feel a very deep sense of pride. Because, I reflected the main features of the war.

Ha Xuan Truong divides the theater into two periods: 1980-82 and 1982-85. In my view, this represents a process of gradual, continual progress, with 1985 being the pinnacle. There was a time when the theater, due to the audience crisis, sought to satisfy theatrical tastes which lean toward amusement and entertainment because the conditions did not exist for raising any matter of substance. Then, preparations for the 1985 festival and the appearance of "In the Name of Justice" ushered in the era of literature and the arts being allowed to address the issues of life. This was followed by the appearance of "Summer at Sea"(written in 1982 but not published until 1985), "I and We," etc. From this, I draw a lesson: if we cause literature and the arts to lack content, they will become all form and no substance, will become entertainment.

The years 1984 and 1985 were a period in which the theater produced many plays, many good plays. The

recently issued Resolution 05 stresses that literature and the arts must address the issues of life today. Our literature and arts will develop strongly by moving in this direction. However, to put the spirit of the resolution into practice, we must join together as one, not turn our backs on one another. Because, the responsibility of the writer and artist today is greater, is heavier than ever before. The resolution has laid the premises for the development of literature and the arts. Whether or not we have works of art today depends upon the efforts and talents of artists. For this reason, too, we need an environment of unity and consensus, need a spiritual peace so that we can work, can create...

Footnotes

* Concerning the "humanism-masterpieces" issue, the Party Secretariat expressed the following opinions: this was a political case concerning which a conclusion was reached and which was resolved. It will not be re-examined. At present, the Secretariat has agreed to allow the Department of Culture, Literature and Art of the Party Central Committee and concerned agencies to examine in detail each writer and artist who participated in the "humanism-masterpieces" case and each of their works and to consider whether to accept them back into the Vietnam Writers' Association on the basis of the attitude and activities of each person (which is not to be called restoring membership)(Ngoc Le).

1. Some comrades sent theses or papers containing the opinions they were going to express but, for unexpected reasons, were unable to attend.

(Continued next issue)

Ideological Life

'Da Gie Nang'

421000091 Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 4, Apr 88 pp 65-66

[Article by Nguyen Chinh]

[Text] Is it the name of a drug?

Yes, it is a type of drug once used in our country, particularly in rural areas, where it was used as a "cure-all." But no one knew better back then. Popular knowledge of medical science was limited. Thinking that "sickness occurs as a result of sudden changes in the weather," they were accustomed to boiling up a pot of water and getting some medicinal herbs from the garden. It was a rarity to have "Western" medicine. In actuality, however, "Da Gie Nang" was good for only a few specific ailments. Fortunately, we have not seen specialists produce any statistics on cases of poisoning caused by this drug. But that time is past. Now, every village has a public health station or at least a medicine cabinet.

Now, every mother and father in the countryside knows that "Da Gie Nang" does not cure nervous disorders or that rubbing the red medicine on oneself will not cure a stomach ache.

And such is the story of this drug. It is also a story from a time now past.

Today, however, we have more than a few "cure-all" cadres within the apparatus of the party and state. This is a modern day phenomenon about which something should be said.

Years ago, amidst the special circumstances of the war and due to the needs of the situation back then, each cadre and party member, imbued with patriotism and hatred of the enemy, stood ready to accept any task or job provided that it contributed to victory on the battlefield and the success of the revolution. Cadres volunteered to be "all purpose knives" in this fight to the end. As a result, there were mass movements on the frontlines, in the rear and even within the strongholds of the enemy to achieve our ultimate goal: total victory.

Today, although our revolution has entered a new stage and although the targets, requirements and tasks of the revolution are different, cadre work has been revamped slowly and still reflects the old way of thinking. At many places, the situation is the same: comrade A, who is working in forestry, is transferred to office work. Later, he is given a job in agricultural transformation and then subsequently reassigned to a job which involves monitoring emulation. Comrade B is transferred from his job in a business corporation to the agricultural department and then to office work. Some cadres are even assigned to jobs which are in no way related to their special field. A cadre in charge of a machine works is transferred and finds himself in charge of a culture-information office. By the time these "cure-all" cadres have been "worn down" by successive transfers and things appear to have stabilized, they are about to retire. This is not to mention that more than a few cadres who received formal training and a diploma at considerable expense are being utilized in a job for which they were not trained. This training can be considered as having been "thrown away."

One question arises: are such "cure-all" cadres harmful? Allow me to respond: "They are." During the period of state subsidies, some of them have caused losses in the millions of dong.

—Were any held accountable for these losses? Were any of them disciplined?

—Yes, many persons were disciplined for the crime of being irresponsible. But payment for damages, from where were they to come? It is also a crime that they received not the least bit of training for the job they were assigned! But that's the way these "cure-all" cadres are!

Because these cadres are transferred to many different jobs in their lifetime, they think they know everything. Their knowledge, however, is vague and less than deep. And, this naturally leads to their "guessing," to saying what others say and speaking in generalities. The opinions they express while working in one sector are completely different from what they say when transferred to another sector. Some of these persons, in addition to their main duty, are also in charge of a number of sectors, each of which is important. These are truly super "cure-all" cadres. Despite this, some of them still overestimate their "cure-all" qualifications and make speeches and issue directives at every meeting and conference.

Ordinarily, after 25 years, one generation's work for society is passed on to the next generation. Thus, the cadres who began serving as "state people" since 1975 have completed one-half of their time. Therefore, anyone among them who, due to subjective or objective reasons, is a "cure-all" cadre and does not bravely face the truth, does not bravely reevaluate himself and is unwilling to learn and improve himself in order to raise his standards surely will not be needed any longer.

Production and business units have embarked on economic accounting. Each job must turn a profit. The special skills demanded of cadres are very specific. No longer can they be just general skills. This is even more necessary in the case of leadership and management cadres. Upper level cadres must be more than just the supervisors of the lower level, more than just the supervisors of basic units if they are to guide and discuss how operations are to be conducted. Gone are the days of "cursory" guidance. Also far gone are the days when basic production units passively accepted the opinions of cadres as "correct," as "being as solid as a rock."

We have been and are formulating cadre planning. Each stage has its own basic requirements regarding this work. In the spirit of squarely facing the truth and being determined to adopt a new approach, we must examine, evaluate and consider each specific case and structure the apparatus the way which is streamlined and effective with the aim of fully tapping the true capabilities of each cadre. To accomplish this, organizational work must be performed by highly qualified persons who know and deeply appreciate the number one importance of cadre work. These persons must present and defend an organizational-cadre plan which meets the requirements of current tasks. It is necessary to promptly replace organizational cadres who have long lacked the necessary knowledge of cadre work and who perform this work in a passive, formal and purely administrative manner. Only in this way can we put an end to the problem of cadres becoming "cure-all" cadres.

Letters to the Editorial Board

Concerning Our Letters

42100009m Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN
in Vietnamese No 4, Apr 88 pp 67-69

[Article by the Readers Department of TAP CHI CONG SAN]

[Text] Recently, the Editorial Board of TAP CHI CONG SAN has received many letters, all rich and diverse in content, from readers.

All these letters reflect deep concern on the part of readers for the country's situation. Many persons have sent letters and personally visited the Editorial Board, contributing opinions, suggestions and proposals to the party concerning economic issues, social issues, party building and so forth...in the sincere desire to help the country overcome the difficulties being faced today.

Ha Luong, an elderly party member in Da Nang, who has done much thinking about the work of the party, wrote: "The days and months keep speeding by, but the cause of revolution seems to be moving ahead slowly." Why is this? This is a question which torments me. I recall the words of Uncle Ho: "The essence of the revolution is the party. The essence of the party is cadres. The essence of cadres is personal qualities. When some opportunists join the cause and have their way, there are no good qualities, there is no revolutionary movement."

Forthright in spirit and openly wanting the renovation campaign of the party to truly bring a new vitality to the revolution, Phan Sy Thuong and a number of teachers at the Bao Loc Agricultural Technical Middle School in Lam Dong Province wrote: "Renovation is a pressing requirement in the building of the country today." Since the Sixth Party Congress, many resolutions of the Central Committee and many speeches by high ranking cadres have encouraged the masses. The masses hope that "renovation" will reverse the very difficult situation we are experiencing at present. However, I continue to be very worried about the prospects for renovation! We now see that the old has begun to cloak itself in the garb of "renovation." In lecture halls, at conferences and in reports and eulogies, highly convincing words are being said: make the people the base; renovation is a matter of survival; squarely face the truth, etc. Everywhere we look, people are denouncing conservatism and inertia, people are indignantly combating parasites and persons engaged in negative phenomena, are criticizing bureaucracy and state subsidies. Everyone sees himself as positive, as new.

But alas! While we see restructuring and renovation in resolutions and policies, in the lessons taught in classes, where do we see it at specific basic units? This question has yet to be answered because the majority of the

persons who are preaching the "ethic" of renovation, are "promoting" the new thinking, are leading and organizing this attack are the very objects of the struggle themselves.

Tran Ba, from Hanoi, also pondered this situation in his "Open Letter" to the Editorial Board. It read in part: "At present, more than a few cadres and party members within the leadership apparatus of the party and state from the central to the basic levels are willing to clearly, correctly and fully listen to the truth but do not dare to clearly, correctly or fully speak the truth or do clearly, correctly and fully speak the truth but it is the truth about another person, about another family, about another agency or unit. They do not dare to speak and even are unwilling to clearly, correctly and fully listen to the truth about themselves, about their family, about their agency or unit. The reason: they are afraid of losing their prestige, losing their position and authority."

This abnormal reality, which has been with us for many years, has resulted in the formation of a very harmful bad habit in the style of leadership and management of our party and state. This habit, however, has not been harshly denounced. For this reason, it has led to mistakes in evaluating and assessing the distortions and inaccuracies on the part of leadership cadres, thereby causing mistakes and shortcomings in positions and policies as well as in the handling of day to day work.

There is a saying in the West which states: "A half a loaf of bread is still bread, but half a truth is a lie."

Many of our readers, after discussing the difficult socio-economic situation and the continuing spread of negative phenomena, reached the common conclusion that the confidence of the masses in the party, in the positions and policies of the party and the state has seriously declined. One of the causes of this situation is that words are not consistent with actions; persons say one thing but do another; and discipline is lax and the law is not strictly enforced.

Nguyen Truc, from Gia Lai-Kontum, wrote:

"Congress after congress, the party has conducted reviews, has pointed out strengths and weaknesses, has come to realize its mistakes and set forth guidelines, tasks and measures for rectifying them in order to move ahead and achieve new targets. Party members and the working people are truly sympathetic. Regrettably, however, all this activity has been like a flash of light, like a brief flame. This light quickly dies out, this flame is quickly extinguished."

Truong My Do from Da Nang thinks: "Our party has lost the confidence of the people because there are many persons who lie and are deceptive. They say much but do little or speak but do not act. What they do is the direct opposite of what they say. They conceal their actions behind words that we all like to hear. Their deceptive

actions are seen and known by many persons but not reported to the party because the upper level does not deal with these persons in a fair and just manner. Therefore, it is very likely that anyone who denounces them will be the victim of retaliation and lose his job. If the upper level were just, negative phenomena would surely have no room to develop. I, myself, am a state worker, a party member. Yet, for many years, I lived the life of a vagrant without any home or personal belongings simply because I dared to struggle against theft by a leader. The desire of a party member as poor as I is to see a fair and reasonable society, to see the concern and love we had for one another during the years of the war of resistance against the foreign aggressors."

Leaders have also thought much about their role and responsibility in the face of the country's difficult situation. Cao Quyet Chien, from Quang Ninh, writes: "The 6th Party Congress pointed out: we must squarely face the truth, must correctly evaluate the truth, must speak the truth. Yet how is the truth to be understood when more than a few party members do not live up to one-half of their standards, when they submit themselves to fate and do not contribute constructive opinions, do not criticize that which is wrong and no longer fulfill their exemplary-vanguard role.

"In order for the campaign to 'purify and increase the fighting strength of party organizations and the state apparatus and make social relations wholesome' to be carried out, I suggest that the party revamp its corps without hesitation and be responsible to history for this corps. It must be determined to expel from the party persons who are not qualified. It must appropriately deal with party members who make mistakes and commit shortcomings, even if only one-half or one-third of current party members remain, because this is a truth—a painful truth."

Huynh Tan Xa, from Dong Nai, says the following about this campaign: "Our people have the saying: 'There is a reason for everything.' Since our party assumed power, particularly in recent years, there have been few cases of misappropriation and theft of public property which have not involved, either directly or indirectly, some cadres and party members within the party organization and state apparatus. There have been few cases of conspiracy, bribery, suppression and retaliation or negative phenomena, factionalism and cases of persons earning a living illegally which have not been related, either directly or indirectly, to some cadres who hold public position and authority. Therefore, social relations cannot be made wholesome if there is not a pure and exemplary corps of cadres and party members. For this reason, I suggest that, in this campaign, the upper level must set a good example first, must be highly determined and provide close guidance in order for the campaign to be carried out throughout the province. Conversely, if the upper level is indulgent of wrongdoing, if it does not resolve its problems well, if it is irresponsible or lax in

guiding the lower level or protects cadres and party members who commit crimes on the lower level, the campaign will be crushed just as it is beginning."

Some readers in rural party chapters inform us that in the campaign to purify and increase the fighting strength of party organizations, some basic units, particularly party chapters, are encountering a very large obstacle. "It is that fathers and sons, brothers and sisters, uncles and nephews...are all active members of the same party chapter. At these places, there is no way to guarantee fairness and objectivity in the struggle to practice criticism and self-criticism. It can even be said that the efforts made in this struggle are nullified. Should not the implementation of this campaign be expanded to basic party organizations and cooperatives and not be restricted to the framework of a party chapter?"

We have only presented a very small percentage of the letters sent by readers to the party through TAP CHI CONG SAN. It must be said that at this time when the country is experiencing many difficulties and everyone must cope with a very arduous and tense daily life, the fact that many readers took time to write heartfelt letters to contribute their intelligence to the common work of the party and the country is something worthy of praise and respect. They have provided much for theorists and leaders to think about and encourage and inspire writers to be a part of life today, to be closer to the working people in order to discover, report on and help to resolve today's difficulties.

The World: Issues and Events

The Developing Countries and the Struggle for Peace, Independence and National Sovereignty
42100009n Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 4, Apr 88 pp 70-74

[Article by Tran Thanh, acting head of the Ho Chi Minh Institute of Research (of the Marx-Lenin Institute)]

[Text] Mankind stands on the threshold of the 21st century amidst international circumstances which are exceedingly complex and filled with contradictions but which are also very dynamic and embody both the sudden development and the threat of annihilation of mankind. Every perception and all behavior in international relations must be re-examined in the light of the space-nuclear era.

It is truly ironic, as we prepare to enter the third millennium, the foremost issue facing mankind is the survival of mankind itself. But what complicates this matter is that the issue of "whether or not we survive" cannot be separated from the issue of "how we live," that is, we must answer the question: can we maintain peace and guarantee social progress at the same time?

The dialectic of this relationship is: peaceful existence is the necessary prerequisite to social progress and the struggle for the development of society in a progressive direction is the factor which creates the strength needed to preserve peace. Therefore, we cannot agree with the argument that social changes will ultimately lead to tension in international relations and can, in the nuclear era, lead to tragedy for all mankind.

The experience of history has completely refuted such arguments. In the more than 4 decades since the United States dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, nuclear disaster has become an increasingly serious threat to mankind. However, during the same period, the world political map has constantly changed. Socialism has spread from one country and become a world system accounting for more than one-third of the world's population and is playing the decisive role in the trend of development of mankind. More than 100 countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the southern Pacific have won political independence, established their own states and separated themselves from imperialism. These countries make up about two-thirds of the members of the United Nations and are becoming the important force in the world political arena. They are a positive voice in the struggle for peace and social progress. The struggle for peace and democracy, the struggle against the nuclear threat, the struggle to protect the environment, the struggle against racism and so forth are developing strongly within the capitalist world, drawing the participation of millions and millions of the masses. These are the factors that generate the strength of peace and social progress, factors which prevent financial powers and the multi-national corporations from doing as they please and starting trouble without taking these forces into consideration.

Here, it is necessary to mention once again an historic fact: the thinking of V.I. Lenin on peaceful coexistence between countries with different socio-political systems was advanced at a very early date, at the same time as the birth of the Soviet administration. This initiative was advanced on many different occasions by representatives of the Soviet government at international conferences but peaceful coexistence and disarmament were still not accepted by the imperialist powers.

Following World War II, the developing countries made positive and effective contributions in the adoption of the principles of peaceful coexistence, which led to the founding of the non-aligned movement in 1961. The struggle for peace, independence and non-alignment paralyzed and led to the dismantling of the SEATO military alliance established in 1954 and the "Bat-da" military alliance established in 1955. These were victories for peace and national independence which contributed to the relaxation of international tensions.

In 1975, history witnessed two salient political events: the victory of the wars of resistance of the peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia and the victory of the European Security and Cooperation Conference in Helsinki (August, 1975).

The victory of the peoples of the three countries of Indochina in the struggle for independence helped to strengthen peace in Southeast Asia and the world and led to the formation of the two groups of the Indochina countries and the ASEAN countries, thus creating real possibilities for peaceful coexistence among the countries of the region. At the same time, the movement of the people of the world and progressive Americans for peace in Vietnam, their demand that the United States end the war...contributed to the victory of the Vietnamese revolution and the national liberation movement in the world.

The victory of the European Security and Cooperation Conference convened in Helsinki lay in the fact that, for the first time in history, the heads of state of the 35 countries in Europe, together with the United States and Canada, signed the joint declaration, which recognized the principle of peaceful coexistence and concretized this principle in all fields of the relations between countries with different social systems. This was the first time that the imperialist countries recognized this principle as the only basis controlling relations between countries with different social systems.

The victory of the Helsinki Conference confirmed a reality and also a truth: as socialism becomes more powerful, peace becomes more stable. As the forces struggling for peace, national independence and social progress grow and become stronger, as millions of persons become conscious of their lofty responsibility and participate in a conscious and positive way in this struggle, world peace and security are better maintained.

This was the dialectic of the struggle for peace and social progress that occurred in the 1960's and 1970's. It clarified a fact: the struggles for peace, national independence, democracy and socialism are the spearheads of the assault and, together have strongly attacked and weakened imperialism.

In the 1980's, the development of the world situation since the war—as M.S. Gorbachev observed—“demands that political movements make a fresh analysis of and rethink their tasks, that they go beyond established models and patterns of thinking.”¹ At present, which contradictions face the developing countries and how are they being resolved?

To begin with, there is the contradiction between the political independence that has recently been won and the fact that they are being economically exploited by and are economically dependent upon imperialism.

Multi-national financial powers have been and are using their financial power, their highly developed industrial technology...to plunder the developing countries, impede their development and keep them in the position of supplying raw materials and cheap manpower. By means of unfair economic trade and such unethical

economic measures as embargoes, harassment, undermining market prices, trade protectionism, high interest rates and so forth, they have put the countries of the Third World in a tragic situation. This situation is the towering foreign debts of the Third World, debts which have become huge and cannot be repaid, not even by the petroleum exporting countries.

As long as these unequal relations remain, the developing countries will continue to be the center of the contradictions between imperialism and the national liberation movement, will continue to be powder kegs, which could lead to open conflicts.

Secondly, there is the contradiction regarding the choice of which path of development to follow after winning political independence: bourgeois democracy or the revolution, the capitalist path or the socialist path.

The common aspiration of the peoples of the newly liberated countries is to rapidly carry out thorough socio-economic reforms with the aims of quickly putting an end to centuries of poverty and backwardness and moving forward to a bright future.

In those newly independent countries in which power is in the hands of representatives of the bourgeoisie and rightist elements whose interests are closely tied to foreign capital, the capitalist path of development has been chosen. But the historical experience of the past several decades shows that the basic problems facing these countries cannot be solved by following the capitalist path. These countries continue to be dependent nations and are playing the role of “world countryside” within the capitalist international division of labor. In actuality, this is the path of the “recolonialization” of nationalist countries, the path of keeping tens of millions of laborers in poverty and misery.

Therefore, radical and revolutionary forces within these countries have aligned with democratic and progressive forces to find a way to free their country from the control of and from dependency upon capitalism and imperialism with a view toward advancing the national liberation movement to a new stage of development. The class struggle within these countries has become increasingly intense and bitter. In some of these countries, there have been coordinated uprisings or coup d'etats of a highly revolutionary nature in which revolutionary forces have crushed reactionary forces and established a democratic-revolutionary government. Some countries continue to wage a long struggle for liberation or are preparing to embark on this struggle... Some persons fear that these hot spots could lead to conflicts and thus affect the peace and security of nations.

In the face of the threat of a global nuclear war, how will the dialectic of the struggle for peace, independence and national sovereignty in the Third World develop? Which specific paths can be followed to a secure and fair world order? Within the framework of the world today, what is

the concept of a revolution? These questions being raised are not being asked only of politicians. Finding accurate answers to them demands the pooled intelligence of scientific circles combined with changes in the realities of world politics, realities which are dependent upon the will of nations.

Marxism-Leninism maintains that changes in the social field within each country are an objective process resulting from the movement of contradictions which have become fully developed within each country. We are not proponents of exporting revolution. At the same time, we also struggle against exporting counter-revolution. Today, every nation can choose its own path of socio-economic development without yielding to pressure from the outside, from any big country. This is a principle of the new political thinking. The developing countries demand that the imperialist powers respect their freedom of choice. As for themselves, the nations now struggling for freedom, independence, democracy and socialism know that their future belongs to them and, consequently, are more conscious than anyone else of the responsibility to preserve peace. But this does not mean that revolutionary movements must sacrifice themselves for peace, must abandon their legitimate goals.

The major contradiction of our times (between war and peace) and the class contradiction within a country, although closely related to each other, are still on different planes. It is dangerous to apply the methods used to resolve class antagonisms within a country to solve contradictions within international relations today. However, it is also a mistake to view the methods used to resolve contradictions in international relations as the only ways to resolve the antagonisms within each country.

Revolution will break out where the control and influence of imperialism are the weakest, will break out as a result of the development of its internal contradictions. If the leading party grasps and properly applies V.I. Lenin's doctrine on revolution, it can lead the revolution to victory and thus make positive contributions to peace and social progress.

Returning to the above mentioned matter of resolving the contradictions steeped with tensions which could lead to conflict between the developing countries and the multi-national financial powers, the only appropriate path to follow is that of struggling for the establishment of a new world economic order.

Today, the world is a single market in which countries cannot exist in isolation. Rather, they exist in interdependence. The developed capitalist countries have been using and must continue to use the natural resources of the developing countries. This is an objective reality. The developing countries tolerated but will no longer tolerate neo-colonialist exploitation by multi-national corporations. Consequently, the only way to resolve this problem is to put fair trade into practice and insure that the interests of all sides are balanced.

The increasing cooperation in the fields of economics-finance, science and technology...between the American Economic Council (which consists of 26 Latin American and Caribbean countries) and CEMA is a dynamic expression of cooperative relations of equality and mutual benefit between the developing nations and the socialist community. This reality is inspiring the developing countries to struggle to free themselves from the control and exploitation of neo-colonialism, of the multi-national financial powers, powers which still refuse to view reality from the perspective of enlightened political thinking.

In the struggle for peace, national independence and social progress, the developing countries have trustworthy allies and a solid base of support in the world socialist community. Today, no nation can exist in isolation outside international relations. The history of the past several decades has taught the developing nations a lesson: following the path of capitalism and opposing the socialist countries, if not leading to a dead end, means, at the very least, being put in a subordinate position. Only those countries which select the socialist path or closely cooperate with the socialist countries can achieve true independence and play their international role. If the developing countries come together within the non-aligned movement and form a common line with the socialist countries in the struggle for peace, national independence, democracy and social progress, these goals of our times will certainly be realized.

The meeting of 178 delegations of parties, organizations and movements held in Moscow on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the great October Socialist Revolution can be considered a demonstration of solidarity, cooperation and will by all forces which love peace, respect the gains made by the civilization of mankind and are highly determined to protect the life of mankind.

Footnotes

1. M.S. Gorbachev: "Speech at the Meeting of Representatives of Parties, Organizations and Movements Attending the Ceremony To Commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the October Revolution" held at the Kremlin Palace on 4 and 5 November 1987.

The New World Economic Age and New Economic Thinking

42100009o Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese
No 4, Apr 88 pp 74-77

[Article by Nguyen Thanh Tuan compiled from materials on the world economy]

[Text] As we know, in the 1970's, the rise in productivity slowed within many industrial sectors. And, also deserving of attention is that in the mid-1970's, there were few

new products on the world market, only many types of different products developed on the basis of old products. The stagnation within the majority of the industrial sectors could not be explained by technical factors because, during those years, the information revolution (micro electronics and computers) had exerted an impact upon all industrial sectors, not only within those that are highly scientific and technical, but even within the traditional industrial and service sectors (for example, communications-transportation). All industrial sectors were capable of applying computers, robots and traditional means, but the electronics industry was developing at a very high rate. This stagnation was mainly the result of relative compatibility among the development of technology, regulations and the social environment.

This incompatibility stemmed from the development of the scientific-technological revolution itself, from the population explosion and the exhaustion of natural resources due to the indiscriminate use of these resources and, in particular, from the world socio-economic situation. As a result, in the early 1970's, a restructuring of virtually all economic processes occurred. And, beginning in late 1973, a host of profound economic changes caused the emergence of a new world economic age. These were changes in the structure of products in international trade; changes in the primary directions of world commerce; new forms within the organization-regulations system and the tools of international relations; the crisis of the international financial and credit system; and the widespread growth of multi-national enterprises. All these changes are reflected in the four characteristics of the 1980's and 1990's:

- The "third" technological revolution (computer science and micro-electronics);
- The socialist and capitalist economic systems being organized or regulated toward intensive development;
- Polarization within the Third World, even the splitting of the Third World into two worlds;
- Regional conflicts and global processes controlling the relaxation of international tensions.

The four characteristics of the 1980's and 1990's are organically related to and, at the same time, create the scientific-technical, economic and political aspects of these decades.

Thus, what will occur in these two decades? Conflicts and cooperation will occur at the same time and increase in intensity. Due to increasing interdependence, global processes (the arms race in the world, the world food problem, the global ecological crisis, the worldwide raw material and energy problem and the problem of decolonializing the world economy) will not end. Also, these processes will not reduce, but exacerbate global contradictions. However, in the process of cooperation, they

will create increasing tools for dealing with these conflicts. One clear example that can be cited to illustrate this is that the two nuclear super powers have been and will continue to have to cooperate with each other in controlling contradictions and conflicts. Nevertheless, the urgency and pressure of global problems, especially the arms race, are serious challenges to the world economic system, in general, and to each nation, in particular. Moreover, due to the profound consequences of the two worst economic crises since World War II (1973-75 and 1979-82), serious and dangerous imbalances have developed in the 1980's both within the economy of each country and on a worldwide scale. Due to the high level of interdependence, economic problems and the disorder they cause rapidly spread to many countries. In 1981, of the 16 basic products (energy, coal, petroleum, natural gas, iron, copper, lead, aluminum, wood, cotton, grain and so forth) needed to support the economy of a nation:

- The United States was dependent upon foreign countries for 11 products, with 6 of these products being imported at rates ranging from 30 to 91 percent of consumer needs;
- Japan was dependent for all 16 products, many of which were being imported at the rate of 100 percent of consumer needs;
- West Germany was dependent upon foreign countries for 15 products;
- The developing countries had to import 40 percent of their grain, 60 percent of their energy and 70 percent of their equipment;
- The CEMA countries exported to the OPEC countries goods worth 25 billion rubles and imported goods worth 21 billion rubles. Of these imports, 30 percent was technical equipment (which provided jobs for 2.5 million workers in the OPEC countries);
- As a result of relations with the developing countries, the OPEC countries maintained 9 million jobs, etc.

Interdependence within the changing circumstances of the world economic system today shows that the quality of economic growth is more important than simply economic growth. This quality encompasses the ability of a nation to avoid imbalances at home as well as overseas and still not cause disorder within society or disrupt world economic relations. These are the challenges of these two decades in the economic field. Consequently, we can only survive and develop if we participate more extensively in the process of the socialization of production on a worldwide scale with the aim of selecting an optimum international division of labor. This is the way to retain economic independence with a view toward achieving maximum advantages while reducing the potential disadvantages to the lowest possible level.

Therefore, today, many countries have abandoned the strategy of developing a diversified economy and shifted to the strategy of selective economic development (the leading industries strategy). This is the strategy of tapping the strengths of the country either by bringing about sudden development in a number of fields which hold the potential for "spreading" development throughout the national economic system or by expanding the international division of labor and cooperation within a number of fields with the aim of strongly developing high output, high quality production based on modern technology, etc. From the strategic industries, broad international cooperation will be achieved with a view toward creating the conditions for the other fields to develop. Generally speaking, in the world today, countries with a population in excess of 100 million usually establish diversified economic structures. Countries with a population of 20 million to 100 million generally establish multi-sector economic structures with a high degree of specialization. Countries with a population of from 1 million to 20 million usually establish economic structures based on the international division of labor, with importance attached to those export sectors which are compatible with the country's capabilities. These are also the important elements of the economic integration for which the CEMA member countries are working and the basic significance of the strategy of shifting to intensive economic development. This can only be done if a correct relationship is established between the nation and the world, between independence and dependence, between self-reliance and economic integration, between the economy and politics.

In the effort to correctly establish these relationships, the most difficult problem is that of correctly determining what one's strengths are. There is no foolproof formula that can be applied here because, in each period of history, each nation has its own features and international circumstances. Although poor in raw materials, Japan is still as powerful and rich as OPEC. Although still weak, it is as rich and modern as the declining United States.

Here, the concept of strength is a dialectical concept based on the law of growth and development in keeping with the trends of the times. More often than not, decline is the consequence of going against trends. Deserving of attention is that, in our times, "God-given" strengths have steadily declined or are no longer effective. Strengths resulting from the combined application of national and international factors are proving to be increasingly effective. Because, today, mankind has gone beyond the stage of "what to produce" and is moving ever deeper into the period of "how to produce." Abundant capital and natural resources and cheap labor are no longer the great assets they were in developing the economy of each country. Today, the indispensable economic factors which a developing country must have in order to move ahead are:

—Technically skilled and organized labor;

- The ability to select a strategy of development which makes it possible to use each internal and external advantage;
- The ability to manage the domestic economy and adapt to world economic development;
- The ability to apply science and technology;
- The ability to engage in foreign trade;
- The ability to obtain and process information.

A new world economic age emerged in the 1970's, an age marked by global processes, integration, interdependence in parallel development and support for the development of national units. Recognizing these special features of the new age and applying them in an appropriate manner within the economy of each country, this is one of the requirements in "combining the strength of the nation with the strength of the times."

From the Books and Newspapers of Fraternal Countries

Studying Democracy

42100009p Hanoi TAP CHI CONG SAN in Vietnamese No 4, Apr 88 pp 78-88

[Text] Editorial Note: democratization is the essence of the restructuring and renovation now under way in the socialist countries. The more deeply we become involved in the process of building and perfecting socialism and the process of restructuring and renovation along socialist lines, the more democracy will be broadened. This is an obvious fact, one confirmed by Marxist-Leninist theory and the realities of socialist construction within the socialist community.

However, there is another no less obvious fact. It is: true democracy can only be broadened and the victory of the restructuring and renovation campaign can only be guaranteed if we correctly understand democracy within the context of socialism, understand which conditions genuine democracy demands. For this reason, studying democracy, studying how to live under the conditions of democracy are increasingly becoming a pressing contemporary issue in conjunction with the increasing process of restructuring and renovation within the socialist countries. And, also for this reason, we should not be surprised to see in the press of the fraternal countries more and more articles related to learning democracy, such as articles on democracy and debate, democracy and openness, democracy and initiative, the individual and democracy, etc.

Below are some thoughts deserving of attention concerning the matter of learning democracy, thoughts taken from the Soviet press in recent months.

Democracy and Debate

It is impossible to conceive of democracy without an exchange of opinions, without debate. How to debate effectively and insure that the targets and requirements of the restructuring and renovation campaign are met, insure that debate does not conflict with the need to be "much more socialist, much more democratic" are not a simple matter. Therefore, learning democracy also means learning in order to constantly increase the results from debates, constantly raise the standards of debates. Concerning this matter, Vladimir Petrov, in an article entitled "The Standard of Debates" carried in PRAVDA, 3 August 1987, offered the following thoughts:

Living by the schedule of restructuring

Many problems that have caused society concern have accumulated over the years. We very clearly understand that no one but us will solve these problems. We must resolve them and take action in order to move ahead in the direction of socialism, not the opposite direction—not in the economy, in science or in the spiritual field.

Of course, there is no one clear-cut answer for the many problems life is raising today. Restructuring and the problems associated with it are perceived differently in society. This is normal. The people who live in society are individual persons with different living conditions and life experiences: workers, collective farmers and intellectuals.

Differing perceptions of problems are also reflected in debates. Within the context of restructuring, debates have become a tool for finding the truth, become the source of new thinking, thinking that has been adopted by many persons. Through debates, a variety of opinions comes to light. Through polemics, we more clearly see the strengths and weaknesses of the draft of an important state document being debated, of a scientific concept, of a pilot project at an enterprise and more clearly see the state of work within a collective. Through debate and the comparison of ideas, we find correct answers to difficult problems, find the best paths to our objectives.

However, the one matter to which attention must be given is the level of debates. Debates must be based on our principles, our requirements and our standards—for socialism, for the interests of the people.

In debates, we must avoid insulting one another, must respect the views of the opposition. This is the minimum requirement, is the natural state, if such can be said, of an educated person. At times, however, some persons, who profess to have the same aims, to defend the noble interests of restructuring, defend the new thinking, virtually forget this when they put pen to paper. How can we talk about debate when such persons only want to take revenge instead of criticize, want to pin a label on the opposition, even a label with political overtones,

when these persons are ready to ridicule, if not threaten, the opposition. There can only be debate if we know how to argue the most difficult questions, if we respect one another's opinions, if we restrain our emotions and listen to criticism and not think that we monopolize the truth.

Debate—it is the honest comparison of views concerning major matters of pressing importance, not trivial matters. Behind each debate must be the interests of the cause, the interests of the people and society, not sympathies and hostile feelings of a personal nature.

We cannot endorse the kind of debate such as the argument that suddenly broke out between YOUTH GUARD REVIEW and a number of other organs of the central press. To attack the "opponent," they even used editorials, that is, articles expressing the views not of an editor, not even of the editorial board, but of the entire organ of the press. We cannot tolerate the use of an organ of the press as a forum to respond to criticism by hiding behind the collective opinion of the organ which one leads. This is not debate but arguing. And where does the problem lie here? It lies in factionalism and arrogance, in not accepting criticism, in not respecting the opposition. Although everyone appears to be saying that they are on board the same ship, that is, supporting the restructuring campaign, defending democracy, if we give careful thought to the meaning behind the articles written, we find that some persons have the feeling that the opposition wants to throw them overboard.

They hurl such labels at one another as: "slanderer," "provocateur," "regretting the past," "hard liner," "addicted to denouncing others," "unethical distortion," "political depravity," etc.

Most painful in all the above is that the two sides curse each other, with each side hiding behind words which are very sacred to us: the people, the party, the motherland, restructuring and openness. But every unbiased reader clearly knows: in this argument, the participants are not thinking about these things at all, they seem to be thinking of nothing but ways to attack each other. They repeat the slogan "communists—advance!" and quote important statements by party leaders but then immediately bring up everything associated with this slogan, with the party that might be doubtful.

We must join together in the search for truth. This search must be made in an urgent manner and in a high spirit of responsibility, not in pursuit of the interests of a faction or individual. If engaged in debate, we must delve into specific questions in all seriousness, on a solid and honest basis and with high respect for one another. If we do not meet political standards, if we do not meet the standards for conducting debates, we must learn what we must do to meet these standards.

And learn we must because many other debates still lie before us. These debates will be sharp. But regardless of how sharp they might be, regardless of how different the

views of organs of the press might be, let us raise ourselves above factional interests, above personal ambitions. Let us elevate ourselves to avoid divisions and unite our forces in the interest of the victory of the restructuring campaign...

Democracy and Openness

Democracy is not only closely associated with debate, but also with openness. However, as light shows, there is "positive" openness and there is also "negative" openness. Understanding how to correctly support, defend and practice openness, this is what must be given our attention, particularly in the case of the press, the effective tool of restructuring, the forum of democracy and openness, as we set about learning democracy and embark on debates with the aim of finding the truth. In an article entitled "Democracy and Openness" (PRAVDA, 11 December 1987), V. Afnasiev presented the major aspects of this matter as follows:

Although practicing democracy, we still must be militant. Thus, what is it that ties these two different principles together? It is openness.

Openness is the Bridge Between Militancy and Democracy

Openness is the highest possible degree of forthrightness in the work of party organizations and the work of the Soviets, economic organizations and social organizations. It is the ability to express opinions on all matters of social life. It is criticizing shortcomings and mistakes. It is criticism which is based in principle and constructive in spirit. Being forthright with everyone and giving attention to the opinions of everyone, these are the democratic essence of openness.

Openness is the opposite of arrogance, insolence, secrecy and indifference toward man. It rejects bureaucracy, formalism and red tape, maladies which are the opposite of openness and democracy. Bureaucracy is most evident where resourcefulness is absent, where inspection by the lower level is lacking and where there are few demands regarding the work assigned. The essence of bureaucracy is fear of the new, a preference for the old and the habit of always doing things in the same way. According to Lenin, the characteristic of bureaucratic elements is "a terrible aversion to even the slightest changes."¹ Within the context of restructuring, when changes are fundamental and revolutionary in nature, no longer "minor," this "aversion" becomes conservatism. The only way to overcome conservatism is to thoroughly reform the economic mechanism, intensify and broaden the practice of democracy, reestablish order at each place and on every job and heighten the sense of discipline and organization and the spirit of responsibility. The only way is to establish everywhere the Leninist style of thinking and acting: the style of being practical, militant and creative; the style of being concerned and criticizing;

the style of not being satisfied with achievements and not bragging; the style of consistency between words and deeds; the style of being thoroughly democratic.

As the effective tool of restructuring, as the forum of democracy and openness, the mass media, of course, must contribute to the processes mentioned above.

Suppressing criticism is perhaps the most widespread form of struggle against openness. In word, it seems as though everyone recognizes the need for, even encourages criticism. But, in practice, the following often occurs: after the press publishes a critical article, the persons being criticized, instead of analyzing the causes of his shortcomings and proposing ways to correct them, digs into the past of the persons who criticized him to find black marks against these persons and mistakes in their work and life. And, if something is discovered, it is sometimes blown far out of proportion and made worse and these persons are punished in a variety of ways, from a warning to imprisonment.

It in no way assists the establishment of openness in our society for us to pass personal judgment on leaders who have committed mistakes, the majority of whom are on the upper levels, not within worker collectives of which they are in charge. This only gives rise to suspicions and conjecture, to the thinking that if the leader is not punished, there is no fairness in our society...

There is one standard for evaluating the leaders of party organizations, economic organizations, the soviets and social organizations, including organizations in the arts. It is their attitude toward restructuring, the specific contributions they make to the performance of the tasks of restructuring. In addition, these contributions must be measured not by statistics, because statistics are sometimes deceiving, but by work, by specific results. And, these results must be summarized in a very forthright and honest manner...

Some persons oppose some of the opinions related to criticism, to openness that were expressed in the article "The Level of Debate" by Vladimir Petrov carried in PRAVDA on 3 August 1987. In the West, they maintain that PRAVDA's intention is to suppress openness, to shut the mouths of those who are criticizing our past and present.

Such is not the case. What did PRAVDA oppose in this article?

It opposed those who hide behind democracy and openness while scheming to tarnish our glorious history, to protect local and factional interests, sometimes even personal interests, to pin on the opposition vexing labels and to restrict openness to the framework of criticism while giving the work of building a position of secondary importance.

Criticism is something that assists us. But restructuring does not live by criticism alone. At present, in the second stage of restructuring, it is extremely important that we glean every kernel of positive experience from the restructuring campaign. So far, little experience has been gained.

Since the April plenum of the CPSU Central Committee in 1985, criticism in the press has become lively. However, while bringing into play and encouraging criticism, the party has also opposed every form of demagoguery, opposed attacking everything, opposed one-sided approaches and opposed factionalism. Socialist democracy and openness only tolerate one method of speaking to everyone—persuasion—and only one form—equal dialogue.

Engaging in debate, exchanging opinions, comparing differing views and stands and selecting the best views and stand—these are the most fundamental essence of openness and democracy.

Openness is not voicing extremely subjective opinions, voicing factional thinking or using openness to gain personal revenge and punish persons whom one does not like in order to suppress criticism. Openness has nothing to do with partisan sympathies and hostilities, nothing to do with making certain persons heroes or anti-heroes. In the eyes of openness, everyone is equal. It does not matter what a person's position or job are.

Openness is closely tied to the principles of party consciousness, militancy and democracy. It is the highest expression of democracy and an extremely important means in establishing and spreading democracy everywhere.

Openness is a political issue because, without openness, there is and cannot be democracy, political creativity of the masses or their active participation in the management of the work of society. Openness is the necessary prerequisite, is, from the standpoint of the state, the attitude of tens and hundreds of thousands of persons toward their work, the attitude of being highly responsible, being highly conscious of being the master of the country. We must make openness an unbroken system which puts us in touch with the thoughts and actions of each person on the central as well as the local level because Soviets want and need to know what is occurring throughout the Soviet Union as well as in the republics, provinces and districts.

Openness is fairness, accuracy and timeliness of what one reads in the paper. The purpose of openness is to give the Soviet people more information so that they become more knowledgeable, more steadfast and more confident in the just nature of our cause.

Widespread openness and forthrightness within each field of social life will give us a clear and realistic idea of the state of our work in the different sectors, of the tasks

now confronting each person, each collective and the country and of our difficulties, shortcomings and miscalculations. They will help us put a stop to all rumors, fabrications and exaggerations.

Of course, openness demands that we criticize without any regret those phenomena who go against socialist democracy, against the law, against ethics. But it also means that we must bring to light and widely publicize progressive experiences and point out our achievements.

Openness is the opposite of a half-truth, the opposite of replacing one half-truth with another, replacing one group or faction with another group or faction. The standards and requirements of openness are simply the truth.

Democracy, openness and the truth in all their manifestations are criticism and self-criticism. We must criticize work and focus our attention not on shortcomings, mistakes and carelessness, but on finding ways and means to correct them. These are the signs of our times, of the restructuring campaign, of accelerating the country's socio-economic development...

Democracy and Initiative

The purpose of democracy is to display initiative. However, as life as shown, not every initiative, not every new form of initiative "from the lower level" serves the interests of the restructuring campaign, the interests of socialism. What should our attitude, especially the attitude of party and state agencies, be toward such initiatives? This is a matter related to learning democracy with which the Soviet press is very concerned.

On 27 December 1987 and 1 February 1988, PRAVDA Newspaper carried articles presenting its views on this matter. Below are the main ideas.

Democratization demands the display of initiative.

In the recent past, numerous initiatives have emerged "from the lower level" to resolve the difficult problems in society, problems which executive agencies have not promptly resolved. Concerning these problems, persons have expressed their opinions at meetings, written in the press, sent letters to leadership levels and even employed a new and very different form of initiative: setting up non-professional activity groups and associations to solve problems. At present, there are more than 30,000 such groups and associations in our country.

How do we evaluate a new form of initiative? There is but one standard here: all must serve the interests of socialism, of democracy, all must have the support of "the upper level."

As we know, prior to the April (1985) plenum of the CPSU Central Committee and the 27th Congress of the CPSU, every clear initiative, one expressed in words and

in actions, had to be examined and evaluated on the various levels. But today this has all changed. Therefore, it is not surprising to see the emergence of different groups and associations within the different regions of the country, especially in the major centers. Participating in these groups and associations are persons who are concerned and worried about the changes occurring in our life. They support the restructuring campaign with their knowledge, experience and energies. Their opinions often become public opinion and are listened to by agencies on both the local and central levels...

This situation does nothing but please us. Because, the main slogan of restructuring is "much more socialism and much more democracy," which also means much more initiative. As everyone knows, Lenin attached more importance to initiative on the part of the masses than to anything else. He taught us to concern ourselves with the rudiments of the new.

Thus, why have concerns about the activities of these groups and associations been expressed in recent letters to the Editorial Board?

It is because some of these groups and associations are not acting in the interests of the restructuring campaign, but for another purpose.

The chief concerns revolve around the "pamyats" group.²

To clearly understand this group, let us return to the early 1980's, when it emerged. At first, this amateur organization consisted of historians, scientists, engineers, manual workers and students who wished to perform useful work: protecting and helping to restore ancient ruins and cultural vestiges...

But, in the past 2 years, this organization has not been what it once was. Old timers have left the organization, new persons have joined. Among these new persons is a small, radical group headed by Vasilev. This group is using the "pamyats" name to things which are completely different from what their predecessors did. In actuality, they have stolen the name of the old "pamyats" organization and are giving the organization a bad reputation in everyone's eyes.

What have they been saying? They have been saying such cruel things as: bars have been opened in the old synagogue sector; they are about to open a brothel there and begin using their wives and daughters as prostitutes, etc.

And now, they are making a virtual open appeal for radical measures to be taken. In the so called "Appeal to the Russian People," we read: "Let us find and more boldly make public the addresses of hostile elements.... Let us find and promote genuine leaders among us.... Let us conduct demonstrations and hold referendums

nationwide.... Let us establish control over the mass media, expose dishonest journalists and punish them.... The motherland is in peril!"

Thus, who is threatening the motherland? The Vasilev group asserts: it is being threatened by the disciples of zionism and chauvinism. Thus, they seek to arouse antisemitism among the Soviet people. But antisemitism and chauvinism have always been foreign to our people, to the nature of socialism. What, therefore, do they seek to achieve behind the banner of restructuring?

How, as readers have asked, has the Vasilev group been able to use the "pamyats" organization to do such things?

The answer is not simple. Of course, the members of this group made a mistake by allowing such a person as Vasilev to ascend to the position of chairman. But the problem does not lie with Vasilev alone. What causes us much more serious concern is: have we begun to not dare call things by their right name because we are afraid of being considered someone whose ways are old, someone from a stagnant period in history?

But it is not just Vasilev alone who is bringing a bad reputation to the groups and associations of amateur activists in our country.

Recently, persons in the West were completely satisfied after reading GLASNOST REVIEW, a review fathered by X. Gregorian, a person convicted of anti-Soviet activities. Let us take a look at a few issues of this review. Especially familiar to the Western press are the articles on "human rights" violations and "political prisoners" in the Soviet Union. The review laments the fate of one "freed prisoner." Actually, however, this individual was nothing more than a person who had served his sentence for embezzling socialist property, a thief. The review also published an "open letter" from persons calling themselves unemployed in the Soviet Union, persons who, due to their adherence to principles, due to criticizing and struggling against bureaucracy, suffered misfortune. They are called the "suffering ones." These persons, however, are nothing more than persons who are incorrigibly lazy and undisciplined. And in whose footsteps is the review following? A Western commentator answered very correctly when he called this review "the appendix...of Russian thinking," a newspaper of counter-revolutionaries in exile. However, the review also received a letter from one of the anti-Soviet centers in Frankfurt on the Main River, which read in part as follows: "...If you need assistance, we will surely provide it. If you have any problems, write to us or give us a call. We would be happy to establish a branch of ours in Moscow."

Not long ago, on lightposts, in alley ways and in mailboxes, Muscovites began to see leaflets appealing to everyone to "support democratic reforms," to demonstrate. The leaflets were signed by the "Democracy and Humanism" Special Studies Group. What does this

group want? The Soviet Constitution is not suitable to them. They are demanding that this Constitution be reexamined, that the chapter and corresponding articles of the Criminal Code stipulating that the Soviet citizen has the obligation to work for it to be abandoned. And, they are also demanding the complete abandonment of ideology in the Soviet Union. And what is it they are preaching? They are preaching the view that the Soviet people have been going in the wrong direction for 70 years and must find a way out of this dead end. A leaflet distributed on the anniversary of the great October Revolution read: "In the months following October, they began to bury the corpses of persons with different views. Grain requisition units has stolen from and killed farmers, workers have been arrested and shot for having gone on strike. It is rampant and vicious war time communism."

In summary, what do all these groups want? In the West, persons have been urging them to join together, put together a unified political platform and seize the initiative. And, such a scheme was actually carried out in August of last year. Members of these groups, of social initiative clubs and other groups organized a conference. But the conference ended...in a mess. Each group wanted to win the "championship." Persons fought one another for the microphone on the stage. Persons who were "icons" just a few days before, revealed their true identity as "frauds."

They deceived one another. They deceived the listeners who applauded the "discoveries" of their newly elected leaders, discoveries which few of us saw reported in the Soviet press. They deceived even their overseas friends into thinking that they were a political force. And who are these friends? They are the second secretaries of the Political Section of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, Susan "(Vac-no)" and Richard Stevenson, and the reporters "(Na-te)" and Kaufman from DPA and Agence France... Above, a number of groups have been named. But who can even think that the number of opposition elements in the Soviet Union is large and that their ranks are growing? No, such is not the situation at all. Each of the groups mentioned above consist of only 10 to 15 persons.

As mentioned above, there are more than 30,000 groups and associations of amateur activists in the country. The vast majority of these groups and associations are actively assisting the restructuring campaign through initiatives, through practical suggestions, through unbiased criticism, through specific work. But, as someone has said, there are some political monsters in the family. Have they closed their eyes to these monsters? Are they pretending that nothing is happening? Readers make a very reasonable suggestion: let us adhere to principle in evaluating the new, speak forthrightly and say what is true social activism of the Soviet citizen and what is political extremism in the guise of petty bourgeois, anti-Soviet sentiment.

The task confronting us is to use the strengths of the amateur associations for a good purpose: serving society. Of prime importance here are the needs to teach patriotism and internationalism; to persuade everyone to believe in the just cause of our socialist ideals; and to use the strength of public opinion and, when necessary, even the strength of the law.

The Individual and Democracy

"Learning democracy" and "learning how to live in democracy," these are matters which relate to both the common laborer and the leadership cadre. In the case of the leadership cadre, as facts have shown, "learning democracy" is not a simple matter. It can be said that this is sometimes an impossible task. Why is this? What can be done to correct this situation? These questions were raised and answered by Academician Antole Logonov, who is currently a member of the CPSU Central Committee, assistant head of the Soviet Academy of Sciences and dean of the Lomonosov National University, in an article entitled "The Individual Within the Context of Democracy," published in NEW TIMES REVIEW, Number 48, 27 November 1987.

Below are some of the views deserving of attention presented in this article.

Within our social mechanism, the command style has been the dominant style on many levels and within the ranks of leaders on all levels for many years. It can be said that this style permeated our fiber in ancient times, when there was respect for superiors for the position they held.

This style and way of behaving can only be abolished if each leadership cadre knows how to create within his collective an atmosphere in which debate is always serious and practical, an atmosphere in which there is sufficient freedom and the spirit of comradeship. To accomplish this, he must know how to work with people.

Of course, things are always easier said than done. Did B.N. Yeltsin have to leave his position as first secretary of the Moscow Municipal Party Committee because he was successful in resolving this problem? Instead of relying more upon others, upon core cadres, instead of educating them, leading them and persisting until an achievement, even a small one, was recorded, he turned to transferring cadres. Thus, it is very important that we understand what is involved in "working with people."

Frankly speaking, there have been very many cases in which the following has occurred: an active and talented leadership cadre arrives to work in a collective which has long been conservative and irresponsible toward its work. This leadership cadre tries to "shake things up" but each of his ideas meets strong opposition. Factions and guild thinking emerge.... As for himself, the leadership cadre sees that this situation cannot continue because the "peaceful life" of this collective is nothing more than a life of parasitism upon the people.

The above situation can give the impression that these conservative collectives give birth to the style that is leadership by directive, by pressure. Yet, exemplary leaders do emerge: persons who "struggle," persons who are a "man for all seasons." Ordinarily, these are truly progressive persons who are dedicated to the cause but who, in the end and in the logic of things, are "chewed up" by their collective, a collective which usually has the tacit or active support of the upper level. How many talented persons have been crushed by this apparatus!

However, when pondering the nature of disputes between leaders and collectives, experience tells us that there is another important factor to consider: the character and quality of the relationship between one person and another. Relying upon others, this is one of the main teachings, if not the main teaching, of the restructuring campaign. As practice has shown, it is very difficult to grasp and practice this truth. This is perhaps because we have long failed to give attention to this truth or because this truth demands a very high ethical and spiritual standard, even to the point of forgetting oneself entirely. True, it is necessary to raise everyone's spirit of responsibility, to demand much more, but what is most necessary is that we not strike fear in everyone. What remains of the good qualities of the leader once he has employed pressure and caused everyone to feel fear.

Someone once heard the following words coming from the office of a high-ranking cadre: "This is not some charity." Work must be done. But is it necessary to harass everyone? Is it necessary to teach and assist them? Is it necessary to give them detailed explanations? These things demand much time and effort. Moreover, generally speaking, is it possible to educate or re-educate people while they are doing their production job? Is there time to do this? This is a question we cannot avoid. But is there another way?

The essence of this matter is that we must perform a dual task, must simultaneously combine the two aspects of the restructuring campaign: organize work itself in a new way and educate the free person, the creative person. There is no other way to achieve renovation. When you must perform a large job, one which you cannot perform by yourself and with which you need the assistance of a large collective, you must, of course, build this collective, must cultivate a creative atmosphere within it.

I work in science. I have students and research trainees. They would not tolerate it if all I did were issue orders and threaten to punish them. In the end, my scientific collective would die. Why would this happen? Because, they would say that I might not hold tomorrow some of the opinions I hold today. The collaborators who have been trained by my side would quietly wait because this is how they were "taught." Consequently, there is no other choice but to create an atmosphere in which they and I can think together, so that our debates give birth to new thinking, to good thinking and we work together to

help give birth to and develop this thinking. We cannot ignore the creativity of any person, even if that person has a very learned leader.

Facts have shown that some young persons who possess talent do not have confidence in themselves. Above everything else, these persons must receive moral support. All they need is for someone to say to them: "Be bold. You are talented!" But how many examples of persons actually doing this can be cited? I have the feeling that our generosity has diminished somewhat. From time to time we hear such statements as: "You don't know anything at all! You can't do anything at all!" How many talented persons have suffered the abuse of having to listen to such words. Of course, there are talented persons who are not abused at all, persons whose talents blossom the more they are challenged.

However, we should not deceive ourselves. We must do everything we can to tap the creative potentials of humans. Lenin was a great example in this regard. He knew how to glean information from everyone in order to clearly understand in which direction life was moving. He was a great man. He saw in the opinions expressed by a person something of importance regarding a principle which applies to all society. Toward his comrades-in-arms within the party, his attitude was one of respecting them and making demands of them. When a leadership cadre no longer understands the times, when he does not understand the methods of the times and does not find within himself the strength to overcome his backwardness, he should retire. Why are we only accustomed to leadership cadres routinely rising to higher positions?

There is only one way for the atmosphere within our society to be wholesome, one way for creative forces to develop freely but not become voluntarism on the part of the individual: to debate matters democratically. But in these debates, we must sing in chorus, not each a different tune. We must allow many voices to be heard. The voices of critics should not be drowned out in this chorus. But criticism should not grate on our ears, either! The director of this chorus must hear and listen to each voice in it. This quality must become the internal need of this person. Although this attitude has not always been put into practice, it is always viewed as an ideal attitude in the way we behave. Against this background, it is not only necessary to maintain, but also to develop in our society the concept of education and the principle of working tirelessly and with attention to detail for man, which differs from the rules of business life in the West, rules which are much more rigid. We now truly must overcome the obstacles which lie along our path. But our path is the path toward man. Therefore, all the means employed to reach this goal must be "humanized" to the maximum degree possible. Only under these conditions can we truly practice democracy.

Footnotes

1. V.I. Lenin: "Collected Works," Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1978, Volume 45, p 454.
2. "Pamyats," Russian for "remember," "memorialize."